



# BLISSFIELD BEACON



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

## Fasting

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly;” -Joel 2:15 NRSVUE

Lent is a time of fasting; so, it is fitting to focus on this particular spiritual discipline in March. Fasting has been trending in the physical fitness community for several years. Fitness gurus will tell you about the various physical benefits of fasting. Religions including Christianity and Judaism have been practicing fasting for millenia. The church often highlights the spiritual benefits of fasting. Lent is a season of translating the physical into the spiritual. It is a time of embodying the spiritual in our human bodies. Fasting is a way of caring for our bodies as a spiritual discipline that helps us connect more with God.

There are many benefits to fasting but I struggle often to see the benefits in the moment. Fasting tests my self-discipline to not succumb to every craving I may have. I'm learning that fasting is not just about what not to do. It is about freeing us up to be more attuned with God. What I love about fasting during Lent– is that we are fasting together.

The prophet Joel called for a Nationwide fast. Throughout history there have been watershed moments of fasting. In 1756, the king of England called the nation to a day of 'solemn prayer and fasting' in view of a threatened invasion by the French. On Friday, February 6, 1756, John Wesley recorded in his journal:

"The fast day was a glorious day, such as London has scarcely seen since the restoration. Every church in the city was more than full, and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely God heareth prayer, and there will yet be a lengthening of our tranquility."



Lent is an opportunity for the church to join the church globally in a collective fast. As fast and pray together, my hope is that we grow in our faith and that the Holy Spirit moves in a powerful way to bring about change.



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.**

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## Worship Series:

From April 12 to May 17, 2026, millions of United Methodists will join in a six-week journey of prayer, learning, and generosity—inviting our whole connection to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.

This is an opportunity to embrace the power of unity. It is a time to celebrate our shared heritage and look to the future together. I love the language used in the last resource I read. This is a time to pray for holy momentum that deepens our faith, strengthens our witness and renews our shared mission.

This series ends with what the UMC is calling Miracle Sunday. This is a special offering to raise funds toward the Endowment for Theological Education. 70% of all UMC pastors in the US have a theological degree but only 5% of UMC pastors in Africa, Europe and the Philippines have such education. The denominational goal is to raise enough for 500 scholarships. This will make a huge impact on the lives of those receiving those scholarships and even more impact on others benefiting from their ministry. Pray for this worship series and pray for generous giving.



Snowbird Corner by Pat Grau

**Love Boldly**  
**Serve Joyfully**  
**Lead Courageously**



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

**Linda Shirley** sends a warm hello from Grapevine, TX a Dallas suburb. Linda has been in TX for Jan & Feb near her younger son’s family. This was her 5<sup>th</sup> year wintering in TX. She treasures this opportunity to make memories with her family, especially her two teenage grandsons.

While in TX Linda worships at the Compass Christian Church, a large multi campus church—a very different style from BFUMC.

**Dorothy Handy** sends her warm greeting from Cabo San Lucas Mexico. Cabo San Lucas, also known as Cabo, is a resort city at the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula. This year Dorothy is spending February and March in Cabo with her son & daughter-in-law. Unfortunately, there is no place for her to attend services and no online option from Mexico.



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



# MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



## WEDDINGS:

DOUG AND HEATHER MARKS (03/05/2005)  
 JASON AND DAWN FISHER (03/26/1995)

## BIRTHDAYS:

CHAD FISHER (03/01/1973)  
 PEYTON MARKS (03/01/2009)  
 ISAIAH KEREKGARTO (03/10/2016)  
 KAYLA GORSKI (03/15/2010)  
 MIKE SHELDON (03/16/1954),  
 JAYNE GORSKI (03/18/1954)  
 ALEXA MAPSTONE (03/21/2001),  
 CAMDEN GORSKI (03/26/2013)  
 LOIS MCCORMICK (03/30/1942)  
 AUTUMN GUST (03/31/2020)



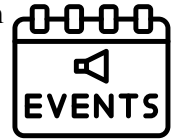
## Potluck and Games Night

March 21 | 5-8pm

Healthy churches eat together. Once a month we break bread together in communion but it has been a long time since we have had an old fashioned potluck. We are also adding table top games to this event. So... bring a dish to pass or a game to play.

## Church Events

- March 9 Church Council meeting
- March 21 Potluck & Games Night 5-8pm
- March 28 Palm Sunday
- March 28 WinterJam in Ypsilanti



## Lenten Breakfasts (9:30am)

- March 5 @St. Paul's Lutheran
- March 12 @Wellsville UMC
- March 19 @First Presbyterian
- March 26 @ Blissfield First UMC

## UMC Event

- Feed the Need Advocacy Day 2026 Wednesday, March 18 at state capitol in Lansing

## Shout Out

I want to thank all our unsung heroes. These are the people that do things behind the scenes. Their work gets noticed but you may not know who makes these things happen. It takes a lot of people to keep a church running. It takes the right gifts being used in the right places for a church to thrive. We are blessed with dedicated people that use their gifts in a variety of ways.

- Fishers who change out our liturgical colors / paraments
- Judy who takes worship attendance
- Sarah and Joey who change out the display case in foyer
- Lisa for making coffee and changing the marquee
- Others who I may be forgetting to mention

Bible Story	Lesson
Adam & Eve	Listen to God & do what he says + follow rules
Noah's Ark	Make Good choices Rainbow → reminder that God's will
Daniel in the Lion's Den	Keep Praying → Keep trying to do the right thing
Joseph + His Brothers	
David & Goliath	

## Sunday School

Ever wonder what our kids are learning in Sunday School? Here are some pictures to tell part of the story. I encourage you to ask the kids to hear more about what they are learning. Lisa keeps them engaged and these kids are not shy about asking questions about the bible and faith. This mockup of Goliath is close to life size! Our kids have been diligent in keeping their plants growing. May we be diligent in growing the faith of our children.





Beneath Thy Cross  
By Christina Rossetti

Am I a stone, and not a sheep,  
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy cross,  
To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss  
And yet not weep?  
Not so those women loved  
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;  
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;  
Not so the thief was moved;  
Not so the Sun and Moon  
Which hid their faces in a starless sky,  
A horror of great darkness at broad noon –  
I, only I.  
Yet give not o'er,  
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;  
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more  
And smite a rock.

### What is a Small Group?

This may seem like a dumb question but far too many people have a narrow definition of small groups. I'm here to tell you that small groups are not just book study groups. The point of small groups is discipleship. Discipleship can happen in a variety of ways: through worship, fellowship, mentorship, friendship, scholarship, stewardship, service, evangelism and nurturing compassion. A key part of discipleship is intentionality. A small group needs to have an intentional discipleship strategy. A small group can be just about anything as long as there is intention of discipleship.

The Methodist Church started out as a small group just as Jesus started the church with his small group of disciples. The Methodist church spread rapidly through small groups. I would love to see us develop more small groups. In order to do so we need small group leaders. If you have an idea for starting a small group we would love to support you in leading that group. Let us know your idea.

O Love, That Wilt Not Let Me Go  
George Matheson

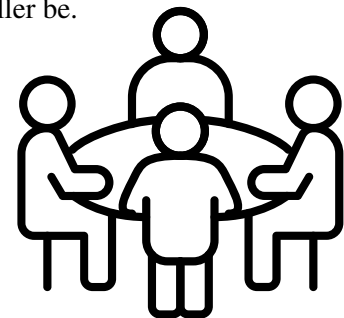
O Love, that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O Light, that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy, that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain  
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross, that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.

O Love, that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.



Some Small Groups we currently have:

- Tuesday Night Bible Study
- Quilting Club
- Chair Yoga
- Coffee hour
- Prayer gatherings

# 2025 Budget Reflection: Faithful in Transition

As we look back on 2025, one word captures our year at Blissfield First UMC: transition. And yet, through that transition, we see remarkable faithfulness.

While our professing membership decreased, our average worship attendance increased from 34 to 38. We may be smaller on paper, but we are deeply present in worship.

## Steady Giving in a Changing Season

Our total income for 2025 was \$108,595, very similar to last year's income. This stability is significant. Despite leadership changes and membership adjustments, 50 households continued to give faithfully.

Your faithfulness sustained ministry.

## Growing in Mission

Even in a year of adjustment, our outward focus expanded. Our story is not of church retreating. It is the story of a church recalibrating and still reaching outward.

## Connectional Commitment

We also made meaningful progress in our connectional giving. Our ministry share payments increased from \$500 to \$2,619—a substantial step forward in supporting the wider ministry of the United Methodist Church.

While we have room to grow in this area, we are moving in the right direction.

## Responsible Financial Adjustments

In periods of transition, it can be challenging to manage and mitigate expenses. We have managed to adjust to costs out of our control and creatively steward our resources. Stewardship often requires a stretch of resources as God stretches us to grow in faith. May we continue to grow to trust God more to supply an abundance towards our needs.

## The Bigger Picture

The numbers tell an important story:

We are smaller—but more engaged.

We spent less—but invested more wisely.

We remained stable—without debt.

We expanded mission—even in transition.

Thank you for your faithfulness, generosity, and commitment to the ministry of Blissfield First UMC. Together, we are building a sustainable and vibrant future for our church and our community.

## Financial Secretary Report for February 2026

Date	Envelopes	Other	Received	For
Feb. 1	2758.00	17.00	6064.55	Envelopes
Feb. 8	613.00	6.00	56.00	Loose
Feb. 15	1595.00	45.00	2.00	Initial
Feb. 22	1098.55	0.00	10.00	Human Relations Day

Other SN deposits: 2/1: \$1500.00- Benevolence Fund (In memory of Barb Burt)  
 \$200.00- Building Fund  
 2/8: \$75.00- Building Fund  
 2/22: \$50.00- Building Fund

Mission's deposits: 2/22: \$20.00- Share the Warmth

Women of Faith deposits: 2/1: \$100.00  
 2/8: \$17.25

This 5 Weeks our budget income was \$6,132.55. Weekly average is \$1,533.13.

## Looking Ahead

As we step into 2026, several priorities are emerging:

- Strengthening consistent giving
- Exploring new streams of income
- Growing discipleship from increased worship engagement
- Continuing disciplined financial management
- Deepening our commitment to connectional ministry
- Expanding outreach in our community
- Raising funds through creativity and teamwork

## Endowments:

The church has 3 separate endowment accounts:

- Undesignated Endowment: \$31,283.86
- UM Fund (Education, Music, & Flower Endowments): \$46,225.72
  - Withdrew \$274.15 for new music lights and books.
- Scholarship Endowment: \$10,734.91
  - We withdrew \$1800.00 for our 3 scholarship recipients.

Total Endowments: \$88,244.49