

Founded 1850



Central Journal

Informing Members and Friends – Encouraging Fellowship and Spiritual Growth

A monthly publication of Central United Methodist Church, Lansing, Michigan

December 2016

From the Pastor, Rev. Linda Farmer-Lewis

Love the Guest is on the Way

Advent calls us to prepare and become, to be the inn keeper who makes room, the shepherds who come and adore, the kings who bring gifts, Joseph who cares, Mary who bears, all to receive the coming of Love the Guest.

Our church is a-buzz with all kinds of Advent preparations, from trimming of the building with joyful decorations, to inviting the community in for Silver Bells, to planning the special worship services where we will adore our God, to missions to those in need; of Personal Energy Transportation Bikes made so poor handicapped people can rise from the dust of crawling on the ground to moving forward, making a living and finding dignity. This Christmas 40 children of incarcerated parents will receive gifts from their mothers and fathers that would be impossible for them to share if not for our Angel Tree Ministry. Our United Methodist Children's Home's young people know they have a home because our congregation will support them through our Dec. 2 Cabaret. Children of Willow school that they may have what they need to learn because we gave supplies. When vandals trashed the home that St. Casimir's Catholic Church prepared to house a refugee family, our congregation, through Ministry of Kindness, sent \$500.00 to help with the restoration and clean up. Another \$500.00 was recently sent to Christian Services, with whom we partner to help people who are struggling. These are just a small example of the ways Central prepares the way for Love the Guest to enter our world.

A lonely man, has a hot meal brought to his door by someone who just noticed he seemed down. Or a family, without a church home, was welcomed and cared for when they needed a place to hold a

funeral for their mother. Or the AA group, who knows we will be open for them, no matter what. Or what it means, for those with no family to find family in us, or those with a big family who need help raising their kids to find mentors we care. These are the ways we are church and prepare for Love the Guest to enter our world.

This newsletter comes to you filled with excitement and anticipation. As a congregation, we have been engaged in a process of preparation; preparing for our future, for the welcoming of new people into the life of the church, and preparing ourselves to be the welcome God want us to be. Because, Love, the Guest is on the Way. It's what we are here for, to welcome love into our church, our lives, our community and our world. Isn't that what is needed now? And isn't it everyone's privilege to do? We must not be shy about welcoming others to love's tasks. We need to be all about it and invite others to be all about it. Not because we need more people or money to be the church, but because the world needs more love! And Love is on the way! This Christmas, let us ask ourselves, our families, our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, our leaders; "Where are you making a place of welcome for Love? Where are you making room for the stranger and the child? Because, if you have been wondering where you can go to do that, come with me to Central, we are all about it."

Love's the Guest is on the way. Come and see.

Rev. Linda Farmer-Lewis, Pastor of Central United Methodist Church, Lansing, Michigan

Worship & Music Notes

Caryn Welter, *Director of Music and Worship*

Many, many thanks go to all those who helped in any way to make the Christmas Cabaret a huge success. To name just a few: Dick Bates – tickets; Pat Mort – coffee and “menus”; Carolyn Kirkby, Faye McCracken, and Pat Mort – decorations; Janet Geissler—auction administrator.

Thanks to all the committees and commissions for donating beautiful, artful, functional and/or fun-promising baskets to the auction endeavor. They were amazing!!! Thanks to all who bought or sold tickets, purchased tables (Boudreaus, Ebersoles, Gibbises, Sanders, and Welters), and made donations to help underwrite the evening. This collective effort will benefit the Methodist Children’s Home and Central’s programming.

Looking ahead to January – In September you were re-introduced to the **small groups** called Chancel Choir; Spirit Singers; Central Bell Ringers. Examine your 2017 calendar and see whether your schedule would allow you to join one or more of the groups. The Spirit Singers rehearse on Thursdays at 6:30 and typically sing in worship twice a month; the Chancel Choir rehearses on Thursdays at 7:30 and sings all but one Sunday a month. The Central Bell Ringers have at least four five-session segments per year, and usually convene at 5:30 on Thursdays.

This February, Bell Choir Director Shannon Spasova will meet with an extension of the bell ringing group. If you’ve ever thought it would be fun to ring the bells, but were in any way apprehensive about doing it, Shannon will be forming an added small group to encourage “wannabe ringers” or former ringers. After the first session, if there’s sufficient interest, she’s willing to continue meeting in ways that will most assist and facilitate bell-ringing. Shannon is herself a great ringer, and loves working with others.



Music Events for 2017:

Reminder: The Ron DiSalvio Concert that was scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on December 11 was rechanneled into his performing as part of the Christmas Cabaret Benefit.

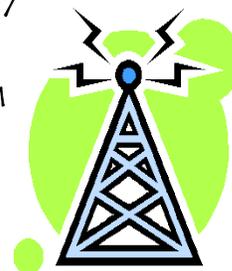
Sunday, February 12, at 4:00 p.m. – Stephanie Gewirtz, organ / piano and Jon Gewirtz, saxophone, in concert

Sunday, March 19, at 4:00 p.m. – Elden Kelly, guitarist, improviser, jazzicist, in concert

Sunday, May 20, at 9:30 a.m. – Celebration of Music in Worship

Sponsor a radio broadcast
Call 485-9477

WJIM-AM
1240



Church Directory

Rev. Linda Farmer-Lewis,
Senior Minister

Rev. Bill Amundsen, Ret.,
Minister of Spiritual Formation

Joi Tennant, *Small Group Coordinator*

Leslie Prame,
Children’s Education Director

Caryn Welter,
Director, Music and Worship, Organist

Alyssa Cossey,
Director, Chancel Choir

Shannon Spasova
Director, Bell Choir

Annalise Poco, Nathan Hartges, Cody Harrell, Amy Voorhees-Hall
Chancel Choir Section Leaders

Patricia Mort,
Administrative Secretary

Alice Pifer, *Financial Secretary*

Stephanie Rave, *Bookkeeper*

Bruce Newton, *Facility Manager*

Edward Pea, Anthony Moran, Jeremy Brown, *Building Attendants*

Office Phone: (517) 485-9477

Office Fax: (517) 485-9772

Website: lansingcentralumc.org

Facebook: Lansing Central United Methodist Church *and* Central United Methodist Church: What’s Happening

Sunday Worship – 9:30 AM

Fellowship Hour – 10:30 AM

Sunday School - All Ages—11:00 AM

Radio and Television: The worship service is broadcast live at 9:30 AM on WJIM-AM (1240) radio and telecast Tuesday and Thursday at 4 PM on Lansing Comcast Cable channel 16.

The **Central Journal** is published monthly by Central United Methodist Church, 215 North Capitol Avenue, Lansing, MI. 48933

Central UMC, 2016, A Celebratory Review

As we bring the calendar year to a close, it's revitalizing to consider all the things that have evolved, from our receiving knowledge, experience, expertise, as we have engaged in the **213 process**. 250 congregants gave input about our church's future. We hired demographer Rev. Tom Bandy as our consultant and hosted a weekend retreat with him. We have at least a dozen leaders participating in the monthly Reach Network with West Michigan Conference leader /Sycamore Creek Pastor Tom Arthur. Our monthly training sessions at Sycamore Creek, about leadership and strategic planning, hospitality and worship planning have created a buzz of conversations about how we can move forward in 2017 to develop and sustain the kinds of relationships that will help us bring people to Christ. These efforts all focus on one thing: What can we, as a congregation, do to grow ministry in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, our neighborhood, our city, our nation and our world.

Let us look at what's happened in the short space of a year, and reflect on where we might go. We have learned more about how to use demographics to better understand our community. We developed a list of Core Values and Bed Rock Beliefs to which we must hold ourselves accountable. In our striving to reach into the community, and especially our target populations, we held a Block Party this summer. We increased our hospitality by offering pre-service coffee in the Library. Heightened hospitality is offered by greeters and ushers; follow-up notes are being written to guests, with calls being made to them by the Pastor. Leadership training was offered for all those who are involved in the worship experience; upbeat music is at the beginning and ending of our services, striving for bigger sound. We're becoming

more strategic about how we welcome visitors, trying to better understand how it feels to be a guest. Connection cards help us do a better job of tracking our congregants' contact information as well their concerns and reactions. A very spiritual and highly-energized Engaging Worship Team has been established; new small groups have been formed, recently focused on the book Simplify and resulting in deepening or newly-formed relationships, within and beyond the church community. We have engaged a new webmaster, Renee Hall, whose expertise has helped us reach out on social media. We've hired a new Children's Education Coordinator, Leslie Prame, and are mentoring new leaders as we move into 2017. We have initiated "God Gigs," gatherings whose aim is to have our people out together and interacting with the wider community. We found this fellowship to be a boon! Stewardship opportunities have been extended by providing members and guests with opportunities to use PayPal to make contributions. This can allow flexibility in giving gifts of love to the church's ministries. Overarching all of these endeavors is the fact that we're striving more intentionally to make our aims all about reaching out. Our hope is to build relationships and care for people.

We need everyone to be a part of this process and to cast a bold vision for the future. We invite you to share your insights and ideas with Pastor Linda or Leadership Team members (Larry Beckon, Trustees; Bill McCracken, Lay Leader; Dave Stinson, SPRC; Caryn Welter, Worship and Music; Jamie Zimmer, Finance).

May you and your family enjoy a blessed Christmas season, and may the world be transformed by the disciples made by Christ's coming.



Small Group News

By Joi Tennant

Winter "Life Groups" Recruiting Leaders

It's time to form all new Life Groups for our 8-week Winter Semester, which will begin in mid-February. We are looking for 5 or 6 leaders who will be willing to either lead a study pre-selected by Joi Tennant; or who would like to create their own group around a personal interest or skill. Here are some ideas just to get your creative juices flowing:

- ◆ Photography
- ◆ C.S. Lewis book study
- ◆ 8 Documentaries with discussion
- ◆ Table games for fun
- ◆ Teach knitting, crochet, water color
- ◆ Study 8 Christian martyrs (DVD's)
- ◆ 8 weeks of potlucks and recipes
- ◆ Teach line dancing
- ◆ Lead a "Great Courses" DVD class

Our Life Group format includes weekly sharing and caring, and also praying for each other. In addition, each Life Group will choose a simple mission project to do together during the 8 weeks. Leaders choose the time and place your group will meet.

If you are feeling inspired by these ideas, and you think you'd like to try leading a group, please give Joi a call to talk this over soon. Home phone: 989-224-8159

Children's Education News

By Leslie Prame

We are excited for the Advent Season! It is a time to prepare! We will be busy over the next few weeks with our Advent curriculum that includes wonderful stories and scripture, super craft projects, family tradition sharing, singing and praise, decorating, eating—and on and on!! But...we will still have time for a "sense of quiet waiting" and listening to God's word as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas. We hope all the children can join us for these wonderful messages.

Photos below: Pastor Linda presents and blesses a bible to Edward Pea Jr., the Clarksons, and several members of the Sewell family during the service on November 20th.



Missions Cathy Amundsen, Chair

THANK YOU FOR your support of the Christian Education offering. \$211.00 was received.

Mission Christmas projects:

Look for the posts in the Library wrapped in garland. One is for collecting mittens for Willow School children. You will find hooks on which you may hang mittens, hats and/or scarfs. When the post is full there will be a receptacle at the bottom to fill. The staff at Willow is always very appreciative of these items. As you know some children arrive at school without cold weather gear and others lose what they started with by the end of the day!

P.E.T. Personal Energy Transportation— changing lives and changing their name to Mo- bility Worldwide, West Michigan Affiliate

A new name has been chosen to grow the reach of our Mobility Carts. While the names PET International and/or the PET Mobility Project have suited the organization well for years, the trustees recognized the time had come to select a new name that helps people make an instantaneous connection with our mission. The name PET International was chosen years ago, well before the internet and social media exploded in popularity. Today, it's difficult to find PET International when searching the web as typically animal websites are identified during searches. Even those who are not searching the web can be confused as they, too, associate us with animal rescue.

Please take an envelope from the giving tree, insert the dollar amount you want to donate, and place the envelope in the Sunday offering plate. Or you may also turn in the envelope at the reception desk on a weekday. (Checks should be made payable to Central UMC, with a P.E.T. notation in the check memo area.)

Sponsored by Mission Commission
Submitted by Nancy O'Shea

P.E.T. Cart Christmas Giving Tree



**EACH CART COSTS A TOTAL OF
\$300 TO MANUFACTURE AND SHIP**

Every dollar counts! Changing the life of a disabled child costs as little as \$300, which covers the cost to manufacture and ship one PET cart. More than 44,000 PET carts have been distributed since the organization began in 1994!

Among Friends

Hannah Boley ~ U of M Hospital
Tom Kephart ~ home
JoAnn Klein ~ home
Lee Ann Stutes ~ home
Bob and Stephanie Westerfield ~
Independence Village of Grand Ledge

Under hospice care ~ Beverly Boudreau, Maria Inez Garcia, Bob Myers

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Transitions

Wilma Sewell died November 10. Her service was held November 15.

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Thanks

Thank you for your support of the **Sewing Group**. We have now emptied the room and donated all of the unsold items to the Upscale Thrift Shop on W. Saginaw Ave, sponsored by The City Rescue Mission. Over the past 53 years hundreds of new clothing items were constructed for needy boys and girls and mending was done for the Open Door guests. We ladies had a wonderful time working and visiting together as we sewed. Our balance of funds was sent to United Methodist Women's missions (\$100) and to Central's general budget (\$110.50).

by Dottie Stark

Thank you to Bruce Newton, Edward Pea, John, Mary and Stacy Morris, and Pat Mort for all the holiday decorating. Everything looks beautiful and we would not have this festive spirit without your help! Thank you!

UMW

Submitted by Pat Mort

Judy Grove Circle meets December 12, at 6pm for a potluck dinner. If you'd like more information, please contact Anita Gamble. Thank you. All are welcome.

The soup and sweets mixes in the jar, made by Judy Grove Circle, are available through December 18 during Fellowship Time after Worship, or until we run out. All proceeds go towards Central's budget.

Christmas Services

4:00 and 11:00 with Prelude Christmas Concert beginning at 10:30.

God Gigs

Our next two God Gigs- Gatherings of God's people in the community - will be Wednesday Dec 7 and Wednesday Jan 11 at Sir Pizza in Old Town. These gatherings have been a real boon to those who come and to the neighborhood we visit. We are also planning to return to World Buffet for some more Sunday God Gigs. Stay tuned for updates.

Lansing Alliance Event Jan 18

Lansing LGBTQ Christian Alliance is hosting the Rainbow Café Wed Jan 18 from 5-8 in the Library and Social Hall. The event is open to all who wish to support and stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ community.



HOLIDAY GIFTS NOW AVAILABLE!

The Judy Grove Circle has prepared goodies in a jar. Soups, hot chocolate and sweets will help you with your holiday shopping and also help your church's budget. These are available Sundays during fellowship time in Fellowship Hall.

December

1 Thursday

5:00pm Bell Choir
6:30 Spirit Singers
7:30 Chancel Choir

2 Friday

5:45pm Christmas Cabaret door open

4 Sunday ~ 2nd Sunday of Advent

8:45am Sip 'n' Sing
9:30 Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour
7pm Vespers Class

5 Monday

10am Staff

6 Tuesday

6pm Church and Society

7 Wednesday

6pm God Gig

8 Thursday

12pm Midday Music Event
5:30 Bell Choir
6:00 Trustees
6:30 Spirit Singers
7:30 Chancel Choir

10 Saturday

6pm Baby Sitting Night Out

11 Sunday ~ 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:45am Sip 'n' Sing
9:30 Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour
5:30pm Vespers

12 Monday

12:30pm Staff
6:00 Judy Grove Circle

13 Tuesday

5pm Legislative Christmas Sing Along

15 Thursday

5:30 Bell Choir
6:30 Spirit Singers
7:30 Chancel Choir

18 Sunday ~ 4th Sunday of Advent

*Monthly In-gathering for
South Lansing Food Bank*

8:45am Sip 'n' Sing
9:30 Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour
5:30pm Vespers Class

21 Monday

10am Staff

24 Saturday ~ Christmas Eve

4pm Christmas Eve Service
10:30 Christmas Eve Musical Prelude
11:00 Candlelight Service

25 Sunday ~ Christmas Day

9:30am Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour

26 Monday ~ Office Closed

27 Tuesday

6pm Finance

January

1 Sunday

9:30am Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour

2 Monday ~ Office Closed

8 Sunday ~ Epiphany Sunday

9:30am Worship
10:30 Fellowship Coffee Hour
7pm Vespers Class

December 2016						
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The Central Journal is published monthly by Central United Methodist Church, 215 North Capitol Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933. The January issue deadline is Dec. 27.

Please submit your article to the editor at farmlewis@aol.com by that date. Thank you.



The Heart of Christ in the Heart of Lansing

lansingcentralumc.org

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Book Review of *Return to Sender* by Julia Alvarez

Plot: After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor incident, Tyler's family is so poor they have to hire Mexican immigrants to help them with the hard work of both affording the farm and work, like gathering the chicken eggs. One of the immigrant girls, named Mari, takes a liking to Tyler. What will happen next? Well, read the book! (but first, the rest of the book report)

What I liked: That I can relate to Tyler. I also liked that the chapters weren't too long, but not too short. I also liked that the story was told in the 3rd person.

What I didn't like: The way the author named the chapters things like "Interrobang Farm" and "Farm for the Lost & Found." I also didn't like how the author didn't include Mari's back story.

Recommendation: That people read this book because it is interesting and intriguing. Also, I agree with the publisher's note on the dust jacket that reads "In this novel full of hope but offering no easy answers, Julia Alvarez weaves a ... story that will stay with (you) long after" you finish reading.

Book review by Finney Clarkson, third grade

Note: The book (another library donation) along with Finney's handwritten outline and review are posted on the Library's bulletin board.



The library collection includes many Christmas-related books for children and adults.

Submitted by Leah Fitch on behalf of the Library Task Force