



THE OUTLOOK

Central United Methodist Church

Volume 125 Issue 12

The Wonder of Advent

~Juanita Joiner

Editor's Note: After Rob's sermon series "Sharing Our Stories and Our Gifts", I decided to *share* my editorial published in our December 2014 Outlook. To this day, I always purchase a small Poinsettia to remind me of this wonderful *story* and the *gift* it gave me eleven years ago. Won't you join me in purchasing a small Poinsettia and wait for the gift? I'd love you to share your stories with me. Perhaps a story that will be your forever "gift".

I love Advent. Was this always the case? No! So, what is it that now makes me an Advent person? The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." Yes, the focus of the entire season seems to be on the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Let's call this his First Advent...his arrival, but it is also the anticipation of the return of Christ the King known as his Second Advent that is the reason for this season for Christians. I love that word *anticipation*... anticipation not only of his birth but the anticipation that through his birth we are promised everlasting life. *Powerful!* Pay attention to the scripture we read during Advent and how it also reflects on his Second Advent. This also goes for the beautiful hymns we will sing. Charles Wesley wrote these powerful words for this Advent hymn that captures the essence of the season.

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Some of you have heard this story before, but it fits so perfectly that I am going to tell it again. This story took place at Willowbrook, the place that so many of my thoughts come from these days. Kathy was a very special lady who ate every meal with Mom, a lady two years younger than me who suffered from advanced Alzheimer's. Just before Advent two years ago, God took Kathy home. To celebrate Kathy's love for Advent, the family gave everyone, and I mean everyone, a beautiful Poinsettia. Poinsettias were everywhere. But as luck would have it, most of these small Poinsettias started to dry up and wither, Mom's included. The staff started to dispose of these plants and wanted permission to also throw Mom's in the trash. I can remember what I said as if it happened yesterday: "No, I want to see if this is true...God came that we all might have life." Weeks later I was still being asked the same question...I gave the same answer while I continued to water her *dead* Poinsettia. Just before the beginning of Lent, growth started to appear on those dead stems and by Easter, Mom's small Poinsettia was full of beautiful green leaves. With tears in my eyes I thanked God for his gift...his gift of life, his gift of promise and yes, his gift of everlasting life. My Advent "treasure" is still green and beautiful for all to see. But most importantly, this Poinsettia is my constant reminder of the "reason for the season."



Advent is the season about hope...hope that human existence has meaning and beyond our present experiences, a hope that the limits of our lives are not nearly as narrow as we experience them to be. It is not that we have possibility in ourselves, but that God is a God of new things and so all things are possible.

*What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give Him my heart.*

Mission Possible for December 2025 (Weekly offerings)

♥ Mission of the Month Heifer International

Our Mission of the Month believes that ending poverty begins with agriculture. Heifer International is on a mission to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by supporting and investing alongside local farmers and their communities.

♥ Helping Hand Fund (Supporting people in need.)

Mission Accomplished October 2025

Mission of the Month

Church World Service \$990.00
(Blankets and Tools)

Helping Hand Fund \$568.68

Helping Hand Support Given During October

♥ Rental Assistance

\$300.00

♥ Mortgage Assistance

\$400.00

*Thank you for helping us
"Build Love" at Central.*

Our Christmas Eve Offering will go to



Join us in planting seeds of hope in Haiti! Their campaign aims to transform communities through reliable agriculture, education, and health-care initiatives. By supporting this cause, you provide vital resources that empower local farmers, educate children, and enhance healthcare access. Together, they build a brighter future for Haitian families, fostering resilience and sustainable growth. **Let's give seeds of "hope" to others this Christmas.**



"Creating safe spaces
for growth and
community in Christ."

♥ Church Tours

The Mix & Match Team along with a small group of volunteer guides have begun hosting church tours on the fourth Sunday of each month following our worship service. These groups will be small to allow participants to ask questions and to provide the opportunity to get to know each other more. Please indicate on your Care Card if you are interested, and we will call you to schedule your date.

♥ Mix & Match Team

The M&M Team continues working on activities that promote connecting newer and long term attendees. Current projects include offering church tours monthly on the 4th Sunday following worship, facilitating completion of an accurate online church directory, examining our Sunday greeting and worship space for ways to make our building more inviting and welcoming, and coordinating with the Mission and Beyond the Walls Team for participation opportunities for all.

Got ideas? Feel free to contact our team: Co-Chairs Katie and Julie, also Jody, Randy, Eric, Kay and Val.

♥ Church Center Directory Update!

We need your pictures!

Thank you to everyone who has downloaded the Church Center app! We are making progress but still need quite a few more members to complete the process, including adding pictures. We will print the directory once we have everyone's picture added.

Instructions were in last month's newsletter and last week's email letter. If you still need assistance, the Mix & Match Team is available after Sunday services to assist. Let's try to finish this project as soon as possible so we can print a directory in January. Thanks, Jody



O Come All Ye Faithful!

Join us for Our Advent and Christmas Worship Series
Holy Disruption by Tracy S. Daub

"Mark bypasses Jesus' birth and his childhood entirely, makes no mention whatsoever of Jesus' father, and offers only a few passing references to Jesus' mother, Mary. . . . Yet the Gospel of Mark does indeed have very important implications for this season of incarnation, especially if we understand Christmas not merely as the birth of the baby Jesus but more broadly as the coming of Christ into our lives and world. However, be warned! Like a jolt of electricity, Mark's message about the coming of Christ should absolutely shock us from our often complacent and self-satisfied lives. . . . For Mark, the coming of Christ is a thoroughly countercultural event, disrupting our lives and calling for an inversion of the prevailing social order."

—Tracy S. Daub, from the introduction to *Holy Disruption*

Worship God With Us!
Christmas Eve Worship on December 24th at 10:30 p.m.
In-person and Online
Worship in the Chapel on December 28th at 9:30 a.m.
In-person only

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from CUMC!

Worship at Central

Available online: **LIVE**

<https://www.facebook.com/muskegoncentralumc>

And on our YouTube Channel: **LATER IN THE DAY**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUQe2i7FzjtcwwSG7Ednw/videos?view=2&flow=grid>



Central Cares

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Gary Doig
- 5 — Mary Duram, Kay Fairfield
- 8 — Marcy Cooke
- 11 — Heather Warner
- 14 — Katie Cotton
- 22 — Tommie Thomas
- 24 — Jack Cooke
- 29 — Dexter Larabee
- 30 — Julie McKeen
- 31 — Christine Tworck



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 23 — Brad & Katie Cotton (1983)
- 31 — Douglas Clarke & Cathy Brubaker-Clarke (1983)

Share their grief:

- ♥ Family and friends of **Sally Peterson**, who passed away on November 1 in Mooresville, North Carolina. The Memorial Service for Sally was held at CUMC on November 18. Please keep this special family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Mobile Food Pantry "Builds Love"

Jenny is the coordinator of our very successful monthly Mobile Food Pantry. If you ever want to see the LOVE that gets distributed, drive by the church around 4...the parking lot is already filled to capacity with people needing our love. Jenny encourages more people to help each month. Speak with her if you are also interested in joining this dedicated group of people. **You will be blessed!**



Experience Clearer Sound in the Sanctuary Using AudioFetch!

1. Connect to our Guest WiFi (Password: Welcome!)
 2. Download the AudioFetch App (Apple and Android)
 3. Connect your hearing aids or headphones to your phone or tablet.
 4. Open the AudioFetch App and start listening!
- Works GREAT!**
Click [HERE](#) to learn how to setup and use this app.

Church Office Hours

Our regular office hours at the church.
Tuesday — Thursday 9 a.m. — 2 p.m.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 1 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 3 — Staff Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
Leadership Council Mtg. 5:30 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 4 — Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 7 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Going Deeper 5:00 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 8 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 11 — Romeo's 8:30 a.m. (Carmen's Café)
Juliet's 9:00 a.m. (Cherokee Restaurant)
- 14 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Beyond the Walls Packing 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 15 — Mobile Food Pantry 4:30 p.m. (CUMC Parking Lot)
Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 16 — Outlook Deadline 8:00 a.m.
Book Club 10:00 a.m. (Library)
Building Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 18 — Volunteer at KFB 10:00 a.m. (2330 Barclay Street)
Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 19 — Knitting Club 6:00 p.m. (Parlor)
- 21 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Going Deeper 5:00 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 22 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 23 — Outlook Mailed 9:00 a.m.
Custodial Crew Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 24 — Christmas Eve Service 10:30 p.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
- 28 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person ONLY) Chapel

IN CASE OF BAD WEATHER

Please check our local TV stations, Facebook or your email for church cancellations due to weather.

**If Muskegon Public Schools are closed,
the Church Office is also closed.**

Special Request:

- ♥ Please keep Connie in the church office updated on any of the prayer requests you have made on behalf of your friends and family.
- ♥ **Where to send important information!**
Please send to all addresses.
- ♥ Juanita Joiner for the Newsletter:
jjoiner@muskegoncentralumc.org
- ♥ Connie Jones for the Church Calendar:
connie@muskegoncentralumc.org

Central United Methodist Church



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MUSKEGON CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST

For faster and more
convenient giving.



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Have news for the Outlook? See page 3 for submission addresses. Next Outlook deadline is **December 16**. Thank you!



Our Romeo's LOVE their monthly gathering!

These ten men had breakfast together in November. If you are missing in this photo, you need to join these special men in December.

All Are Welcome!

Beyond the Walls

What can nine people do after
Coffee Hour to help with
Muskegon's hungry?

They can packed 110 meals that will
be shared throughout our community!

Want to help?

They pack again on December 14
and **YOU** are invited to help them.

"Build Love" for CUMC!

