

YOUTH MINISTRIES CALENDAR

Sunday January 19

11:15am - Sunday School In the Parlor. "Creation Care" with Molly Mechtenberg of Hope for Creation
 11:30am-1pm - Confirmation Class in room 305
 6-7:30pm - Youth Group Pizza Night! Please sign-up to bring needed ingredients for our meal.

Sunday January 26

11:15am - Youth Sunday School
 6-7:30pm - Youth Group in the Youth Lounge - Hide and Seek & Small Groups, "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

Sunday February 2

11:15am - Youth Sunday School
 Afternoon - Ice skating at Wings West. Meet at the church at 1:30pm for open skate from 1:45-3pm. We will return to church by 3:30pm. Cost is \$13 per person. No evening Youth Group.

Sunday February 9

11:15am - Youth Sunday School
 6-8:30pm - Super Bowl Party in the Youth Lounge (6-8:30 or the end of the half-time show). Sign-up with the food you will bring for the potluck.

SPLENDID SUPPERS FOR SEVEN

by Mary Whittaker Duncan and Vickie Seals, Lay Leaders

Round 5 of "Splendid Suppers for Seven" is coming in March! If you're interested in hosting, please sign-up at the Welcome Center desk by the end of January. Hosting will involve opening your home to a group of seven (including you) on a date of your choice in March, and providing beverages and a main dish. Guests are asked to bring a side dish or desert. Guest sign-up will begin in February at the Welcome Center.

THANK YOU NOTES

From the staff: We are very grateful for the many beautiful cards, delicious food, and gifts that you shared with us this holiday season! Your gifts gave us moments to pause and remind us during this busy season in the church of the many blessings of your support. Thank you!

From Dan & Sharon Bunker: The New Year's Eve Fest was a great success this year with many people returning and others visiting for the first time. Thank you to those who volunteered throughout the evening, welcoming guests to First Church. Your help added to the success of this annual downtown Kalamazoo event.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS BY DAWN WHEATON

Thank you for your continued support of our food pantry. We continue to serve those in need of food assistance on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There are some items that Loaves & Fishes does not provide but are often requested by guests to the pantry. See the below list. Please drop off donations in the box outside the food pantry. (At this time, we no longer need egg cartons)

Toilet paper	Condiments
Deodorant	Toothpaste/brushes
Salad dressings	Can openers
Coffee	Jars of baby food

JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH

Many individuals in Kalamazoo cannot afford warm winter clothing. We are hoping to help keep them warm by collecting the following items for Ministry with Community and the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. A collection box for your donations is located outside the food pantry.

Ministry with Community

- T-shirts (adult sizes medium-4XL)
- Men's underwear (medium-4XL)
- Women's underwear (sizes small, medium, and large, please no X-large or XXL)
- Hand warmers

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission - Women's Shelter

- Socks (adult and children's sizes)
- Underwear (adult and children's sizes)
- Diapers (size 3, 4, 5, 6)

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission - Men's Shelter

- Socks
- Men's underwear (all sizes)
- Undershirts (all sizes)
- Winter gloves

HOPE FOR CREATION - JAN 19

Molly Mechtenberg, the executive director of Hope for Creation, will be presenting in the parlor during Sunday School hour after worship on Jan. 19. Youth are encouraged to attend as well. Molly will lead a discussion on current matters of climate justice and provide information about Hope for Creation. First UMC of Kalamazoo is among the founding members of this faith/spirituality-based effort to combat climate crisis.



2024 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

by Jacqueline Stilger, Director of Music

Members of First Beats and the younger children of the congregation did a wonderful job on December 22nd retelling the story of Christ's birth in their annual Christmas pageant titled, "The Inn."

The story was an imaginative one where the shepherds and Mary and Joseph kept meeting obstacles as they made their way to Bethlehem. Thankfully, not even the lure of peanut butter and anchovy pizza could keep the shepherds from

finding the gift of Christmas that God has given all of us.

Many thanks to all who helped to make the pageant a success. A special thanks to Carol Grant and Lisa Coe for the costumes, Jane Rettke for the scenery, and to Drew Bolton and his stage set-up crew. We also wish to thank the congregation for the love and support that you give to the children of this congregation in so many ways!



Images courtesy: Julia Librizzi and Christiane Stakely



Some of our set-up crew: Mitch Wilson, Derek Wheaton, Drew Bolton, Ed Hessler, and Dan Bunker

A BIG thank you to all those who helped with set-ups and tear-downs for the recent Children's Christmas pageant as well as the New Year's Eve Fest! We were blessed with many hands, too many to mention here, but all were an important part of the success of these events.

If you would like to be on Drew Bolton's email list of contacts for future event set-ups and tear-downs, please email him at dbolton@umc-kzo.org.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRIES *by Julia Librizzi*

Save these dates for our Family Fun Events

- Friday, Jan. 24 – Swimming at Borgess Fitness Center
- Sunday, Feb. 2 – Ice Skating at Wings West
- Sunday, Feb. 9 – Super Bowl Party at Parthasarathy Home
- Friday, Mar. 14 – Bowling at Airway Lanes

Faith Milestones (Grades 3-5) Events

- Sunday, Feb. 16 from 6-7:30pm – Back Stage Tour of Church
- Sunday, Mar. 16 from 6-7:30pm – Baptism and Confirmation
- Sunday, April 13 from 6-7:30pm – Lent
- Friday, May 16 from 6-8pm – Scavenger Hunt Downtown

Family Foundations Sunday School Class

This class for parents with young children that meets after worship on Sundays (while the children are in Sunday School) will be listening to a 30-minute podcast by Kate Bowler, a religious history professor at Duke University. Ms. Bowler interviews different guests about success, failure, suffering, and happiness. After listening, we will then have some guided discussion around the topics brought up in the podcast. This is a drop-in class in room 209, so feel free to join us whenever! Coffee and tea available.

Family Fun Event: Swimming

Our January Family Fun Night event is swimming! Join us for a potluck and family swim time at Ascension Borgess Health and Fitness on Gull Road on Friday, **January 24** from 5-7pm. We will swim first from 5-6pm and then have a potluck in their meeting room together from 6-7pm.

Family Fun Event: Ice Skating

Rent a pair of skates or bring your own, public skate at Wings Stadium is the perfect opportunity to get on the ice for some ice skating fun, no matter your skill level! Join us on Sunday, **February 2**, from 1:45pm to 3pm. The cost is \$13/person (\$10 for admission and \$3 for skate rental). Ages 4 and under skate free.

Super Bowl Party!

CFM families are invited to our annual Super Bowl viewing party! Please join us at the Parthasarathy Home at, 845 Westmoreland Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49006 to watch the game on **February 9** at 6pm or just the commercials - feel free to stay until the game is done or leave at any time your family is ready. There will be punch, cupcakes, homemade mac-n-cheese, and some chips/pretzels (and all needed paper/plastic tableware). Bring a dish to share.

PLEASE KEEP THESE FRIENDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

- Nancy Douglas
- Lenora Holiday
- Judy McClelland
- Mumma Family
- Susan Noble
- Anna Rasmussen
- Hank Rohs
- Mary Lou Sanderson
- Michael Seals
- Barb Skuza
- Sally Stevens
- Gerry & Tom Schaberg
- Dick Shilts
- Judy Sims
- Tom and Marcia Stobie
- Lori Valkema
- Britnee & Brandon Warzybok Family

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you would like to share a prayer request with our clergy and prayer ministry team, please visit www.umc-kzo.org/contact-us/prayer-request/ or call the church at (269) 381-6340 and leave a message.

PRAYER TEAM

Please consider joining our prayer team. They meet to pray for one another, our church family, and for any prayer requests made known to them. Join them on Wednesdays at 11:30am in the chapel. All are welcome.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REMINDER

Is your current will keeping up with you? Does it reflect your Christian commitments? Make sure your will is up-to-date.

FIRST WORD FOR FEBRUARY

Articles for the next issue are due on Friday, February 7, 2025. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be emailed to Jennifer Stupica, at jstupica@umc-kzo.org. Articles may be edited for space and content.

WINTER WEATHER POLICY

The church will always be open for worship on Sunday. Please use discretion in deciding when to venture out. Weekday meetings may be canceled if travel is dangerous. Team and committee chairs are asked to contact the church and their team/committee if a meeting is canceled. Please check WWMT Channel 3 news, Facebook, and email for church closing notices. Please note the church may be open even when area schools are closed.

ILJ-MICHIGAN NEWS

by Ann Sweany, ILJ-MI Clinic Coordinator



As 2025 begins and we anticipate a new administration in Washington, ILJ-MI and our Kalamazoo office are making plans to continue our work with people navigating the immigration legal system. As with any administration, changes in immigration policy are likely. ILJ is ready to adapt as changes occur.

If you are interested in reading current advice for immigrants worried about their status, the below link from MIRC (Michigan Immigrant Rights Center) is available: <https://bit.ly/MIRCKYR>. As always, if you are seeking assistance, please contact ILJ's central intake at 616-320-2734.

In Kalamazoo, we will be holding intake clinics regularly in the next months, probably starting in February. Stay tuned for more information on how you can help with the clinics.

ANGEL TREE GIFTS

by Donna Dunyak, Outreach Team

Our November/December Mission of the Month, the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program, was a huge success this year! Our church donated 63 gifts and 25 gift cards (totaling \$860). It was one of the most successful years for our Angel Tree ministry. Altogether, 2,433 children representing 929 families received gifts this Christmas from Salvation Army. A sincere "thank you" to everyone who made Christmas so much brighter for families and children in the Kalamazoo community!

OUR STORY IS NEVER OVER PROJECT

This winter, GRIT (God-Centered Resistance & Intentional Transformation Team, formerly known as the Reconciling Ministries Team), in partnership with our lay leaders, invites our congregation into a year-long exploration of our values of Love, Inclusion, Community, and Justice through the means of storytelling, writing, prayer, quilting, and vision. More details will be coming soon with how you can participate. Inspired by The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves by Dr. Shawn Ginwright, the "Our Story is Never Over" Project will offer a series of creative opportunities to pivot over the course of the next 18 months.

Look for a link to an overview to "Our Story is Never Over" in our weekly Around the Corner E-News. If you are not currently on our church email list, please contact Jennifer Stupica at jstupica@umc-kzo to be added. Also look for information on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary.

SUNDAY ADULT CLASS OFFERINGS

Pastor Matt Weiler is leading an adult class, "God is Good, All the Time? A study in the book of Genesis." We claim that God is good all the time, and yet, is this true? And where does this come from? While studying the narrative of the Book of Genesis, this class will explore the biblical foundations of this claim. We may not draw any conclusions, but our curiosity will take us a long way. **Class will meet on Sundays through Feb. 16, but will not meet on Jan. 19.** (Molly Mechtenberg from Hope for Creation will be presenting climate justice information on Jan. 19.)

Also meeting on Sundays after worship in the chapel through Feb. 2 is a **Grief Group**. Working through times of grief in our lives can be an ongoing process. No matter where you are in your grief process, you are invited to become part of a group in our faith community who understand and can walk with you there. Drop-ins welcome.

The Generosity Team thanks you for your 2025 pledge. As of 1/15/25, we have received 148 pledges totaling \$789,014 toward our 2025 operating budget. Estimate of Giving cards for your pledge are available at the Welcome Center if needed.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO FINANCIAL UPDATE						
	2022	2023	Month Ending 11/30/24	Year to Date 11/30/24	2024 Budget	% of Annual Budget
TOTAL INCOME	1,009,594	1,155,208	77,444	950,399	1,044,876	90.96%
TOTAL EXPENSE	1,049,297	1,118,942	92,363	1,053,359	1,173,906	89.73%
EXCESS/(DEFICIT)	(39,703)	36,266	(14,919)	(102,960)	(129,030)	

11/30/24 FUND BALANCE **\$57,422**
(after November income and expenses)