



- 1 Connie Kelsey
- 4 Brad Jones
- 7 Gordie Barry
- 13 John Haskell
- 23 Kathleen & Michael Haynes
- 26 Cyndi Burgin
- 27 Ashlyn Jones
- 28 Ellen Derber

**First United Methodist Church**  
**Worship Service 11:00am**



**First United Methodist Church**  
**Church Phone: (906) 341-6662**  
**Pastor: Rev. B.J. Ash Cell: 906-286-1492**  
**email: [pastor@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:pastor@manistiquemethodist.org)**  
**Office Hours: Pastor B.J. M-F 8 am-12 pm, Off Wed**  
**Connie: Office Hours T-W 10-2 pm, plus working**  
**remotely M, Th and F, you can reach her by cell or**  
**email: [office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)**  
**[www.manistiquemethodist.org](http://www.manistiquemethodist.org)**

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 Manistique First UMC where you see the  
 magnifying glass at the top of the page.  
 Live worship services each Sunday at 11AM.



# THE CHRISTIAN CALLER

**First United Methodist Church**  
**190 N. Cedar Manistique, MI**  
[www.manistiquemethodist.org](http://www.manistiquemethodist.org)  
[office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)  
**February, 2025**

**PASTOR'S  
 WORDS**

Dear friends in Christ, as we gather together in worship, prayer, and service, we are reminded of the call upon our lives as disciples of Christ—to love one another as He has loved us. In these days, the church faces many questions, including one that has become particularly significant in some of our congregations: should we, as a community of faith, discern whether or not to adopt specific policies regarding LGBTQIA+ individuals?

It is important to remember that we, as a United Methodist Church, are a part of a broader Christian family that spans time and place. Our shared mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and this mission requires both faithfulness to Scripture and responsiveness to the needs of all God's children.

In considering this question, I invite us to reflect deeply on a few key principles that guide us as United Methodists:

- **The Call to Love:** Jesus commands us to love one another, not just in word but in action. This includes reaching out to those who may feel marginalized, rejected, or excluded. Our love should be unconditional, mirroring God's boundless love for each person, regardless of their identity or background.
- **Scripture and Tradition:** As United Methodists, we recognize the authority of Scripture, the importance of tradition, reason, and experience in shaping our understanding of God's will. We understand that this is a complex issue, and we seek to engage in open, respectful dialogue about how we interpret the teachings of Scripture in light of our call to love and care for all people.
- **Unity in Diversity:** The body of Christ is made up of many different members, each with unique gifts and experiences. We are called to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In moments of disagreement, we must work hard to ensure that our conversations are marked by grace and respect. It is through our unity in Christ that we can best bear witness to God's love in the world.
- **Guidance from the Holy Spirit:** As we deliberate and pray over these important matters, let us lean into the guidance of the Holy Spirit, asking for wisdom, understanding, and discernment. God has called us to be a people who seek justice, love, mercy, and walk humbly with God.

We are a community of people with differing opinions, backgrounds, and experiences, yet we

**PASTOR'S WORDS**

are united by our faith in Jesus Christ. I encourage us to approach this question with humility and openness, recognizing that no decision we make is ever without the need for ongoing prayer, discernment, and reflection.

As your pastor, I invite you to engage in this conversation with respect and empathy. Let us listen to one another, especially those who might feel the pain of exclusion. Let us pray together, seeking God's will and trusting in the Holy Spirit to lead us in love. While the question of specific policies regarding LGBTQIA+ is important, we must also remember that it is but one part of our larger call to be faithful disciples of Christ in a broken and hurting world. Let us not allow our disagreements to divide us, but instead, let them deepen our commitment to live out the love and grace of God in all that we do. In closing, I encourage you to pray for wisdom as we continue this journey together. May God's peace, which surpasses all understanding, guide our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. We are scheduling a dialogue meeting for everyone to share their perspectives on this for February 10th at 4:30 PM.

Grace and peace be with you all.

Pastor B.J.

**A Note from the Administrative Council:**

A special meeting of the Administrative Council was held on January 23, 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the church members selected to serve on the two teams needed to proceed with the Simplified Accountable Structure (SAS) program. Guidelines indicate that the lay leader, lay representative to Annual Conference, Staff-Parish Relations Committee chair, and Trustee chair must be designated to serve on the Leadership Board. Nine members are recommended, although for smaller churches six members may be appointed. In addition, one person may serve in more than one of these positions. The Pastor can serve on the Leadership Board, but does not have a vote. Terms are for three years, after which new members are selected. Serving on the Discernment Team are Janet Helmbold, Connie Kelsey, Pastor B.J., Penny Tracy, Char Crosby, and James Gaffney. The Discernment Team has the responsibility for becoming familiar with the SAS structure and process, and determining how the current church administration, would change if the process is adopted. Serving on the Prayer Team are Gordie Barry, Louise Burson, Candace Haskell, Carolyn Williams, Carol Livingston, and Mary Whinnen. The Prayer Team is charged with praying for the Discernment Team, the church body, and seeking the will of God throughout the process.

While there are expenses associated with the overall process, there are also both Conference and District grants available to assist with covering the costs. This church already has purchased the necessary books for the team members. We have also applied for, and been approved for, a District grant which will help defray the cost of meeting with a coach, the Rev. James Nogle. In addition, Rev. Nogle, who lives in Lake City, will charge mileage only from St. Ignace to Manistique rather than from Lake City, as he can combine his trips with St. Ignace and Manistique in one, allowing both churches to share the costs.

So far we are at the very beginning stage of this process. We will keep you informed of our progress as we go along. All church members are invited to attend the SAS meetings, although only Team members have voice and vote.

Janet Helmbold, chair, Administrative Council



**First United Methodist Church**

We exist to joyfully share God's love,  
preach the Good News, and make disciples.

**February, 2025**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<p><b>Mission Noisy Offering — Middle &amp; High School Helpful Hotspot</b></p> <p>This collection will be used at the Manistique Middle/High School to assist students in need. Drop your donation in glass jar as you enter or exit the sanctuary! Thank you for your donation!</p>						<p>1</p> <p>Connie Kelsey </p>
<p>2</p> <p>Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM</p>	<p>4</p> <p>UWF 1 PM (United Women in Faith)</p> <p>Brad Jones </p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Discernment Group Training 10 AM</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Education Committee 10 AM</p> <p>Gordie Barry </p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM</p> <p>Church Dialogue 4:30 PM</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p> Pasty Prep 7:30 Sales 10-1 PM</p>	<p>13</p> <p> Pasty Prep 7:30 Sales 10-1 PM</p> <p>John Haskell </p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Newsletter information Deadline</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM</p> <p>Michael &amp; Kathleen Haynes </p>	<p>24</p> <p>Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p> Cynthia Burgin</p>	<p>27</p> <p> Ashlyn Jones</p>	<p>28</p> <p> Ellen Derber</p>	<p><b>Birthday &amp; Anniversary</b></p> <p>1 Mary Whinnen </p> <p>1 Ken &amp; Cyndi Burgin </p>

# Prayer Chain

As many of you know we have a group in this church, called the Prayer Chain, that offers daily prayers for individuals, situations, and problems brought to them. Prayer requests can also involve individuals, situations, etc. outside our church community.

These prayer requests may be called in to Pastor B.J. Ash at 906-341-6662 (church) or 906-286-1492 (Pastor B.J. cell). You may also call Carol Weinert at 906-341-4499.



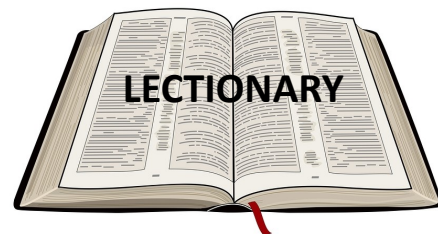
Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search **1st United Methodist Church** where you see the magnifying glass at the top of the page.

Live worship services each Sunday at 11AM.

Committee updates and newsletter articles are always welcome!

If you have anything you wish to have published in the next newsletter submit before **February 21, 2025** deadline.

Pictures and other additions can be emailed to: [office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)



The collection amount for January Mission Noisy Offering for God's Country Community Ministries will be announced soon. Thank you for your support!

## February 2 — 4th Sunday After Epiphany

Jer 1:4-10; Ps 71:1-6 (UMH 794); 1 Cor 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

## February 9 — 5th Sunday After Epiphany / Scouting Sunday

Isa 6:1-8, (9-13); Ps 138 (UMH 853); 1 Cor 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

## February 16 — 6th Sunday After Epiphany

Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1 (UMH 738); 1 Cor 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

## February 23 — 7th Sunday After Epiphany

Gen 45:3-11, 15; Ps 37:1-11, 39-40 (UMH 772); 1 Cor 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

## FOR OUR PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION

Let us please keep the following people in our prayers: Char Crosby, Carol Weinert, Penny Tracy, Jean Smith, Curt & Celie Norton, Barbara Schneider, Ted Burson, Lynn LaRose, Katie Putnam, Joel Prater, Jo Nell Rubick, Phyllis Burge, Martha Weeks, Kerry Billings family concerns, Mary Prater, Connie Meade, Connie Whitsitt, Sharon V. & Celie's N. brother, Bill Tracy's family, Jesse Baker, Sandi Kolder, Michael Haynes, the leaders in our church, our community, our country, the world, our unspoken requests, and the joyous blessings that we have received.



## A View From the Belfry February, 2025

### Greetings from me, Benny, the freezing bat in the really, really cold belfry!

Winter finally showed up for good at the end of December, and then hung around through January! I suppose it may last through February, March and some of April, too! Somehow, that didn't stop all you hard-working United Methodists from working just as hard as always! The Trustees have been busy cleaning, organizing, and scrubbing the Social Hall. They stripped the floor and scrubbed it, then applied a new coat of wax or whatever it is. (I thought wax was used to make candles with, but who knows?) They also wiped down the walls, chairs, tables, and about everything else down there. In addition they removed the dirty tape strips from the steps to the Social Hall. It all looks great, thanks to all you busy workers! In addition, some sort of loop thingy was installed in the sanctuary so those who rely on hearing aids and have the kind that can plug into the loop thingy can hear the sermons much better than before. Wow! Technology sure has some benefits for those who know how to use it, and even for those who don't have a clue how it all works but can plug into it anyway with the help of those techy nerds who do know how it works!

In addition to the work in the Social Hall, all the committees are busy meeting again after the Christmas break. The Education Committee is hard at work coming up with great ideas to include more people in the education programs such as Sunday school classes for both children and adults, the Bible study class, and of course, Vacation Bible School. The Ad. Council got together to learn about the SAS program which they are exploring. Now, I always thought that SAS stood for Scandinavian Airlines System, but I don't know why the Ad. Council would be trying to adapt an airlines to running the church, unless they want to explore how churches are run in other countries around the world. I guess I was on the wrong track though. Apparently SAS in this case stands for Simplified Accountable Structure. The church has some big books for it and has come up with a couple of work teams, who will meet with a coach or something soon. I guess they applied for, and also received, a grant for funding some of the program. I'm just curious as to what sport the coach is planning to coach here. I don't mean to criticize, but some of the members of this church look a little bit too gray in the hair to do really well with football or pole vaulting or things like that. We'll have to wait and see, I guess.

Finally, good news! Remember the beautiful likeness of a bat which was hiding around the church? He was finally found, by Connie Kelsey, nestled in a stack of shirts from the 150 year celebration the church had last year! He has been moved to a new hiding place, so keep your eyes open! As for the shirts, they are in a bookcase in the library area, and are still available for purchase! Anybody want a slightly dated shirt?? They're really comfortable and look to be all the fashion for those of you who are into high fashion! (At least that's what I've been told!) If you'd like to buy one, see Pastor B.J. or Connie Kelsey!

A final bit of good news, hot off the presses! Cyndi Burgin is taking over the privilege of choosing the hymns used in your Sunday services! She volunteered to relieve that crabby old lady who hates bats of the hymn selection privilege! She'll start in March, at which point I suspect that the hymns you sing will be much, much better than the ones you are singing now! Maybe she'll start with "Happy Days Are Here Again!" She might even find a rendition which uses the same tune, known as "Happy Bats Are Here Again!" We'll see, come March!!

### Education Committee

*“The primary task of the ministry group (committee) on education ... is to provide learning experiences for people of all ages so that they may grow in understanding the Gospel and become better equipped for daily living as faithful Christian disciples.”*

The Education Committee reviewed that mission statement at its January meeting. Over the past few years, the committee has become known as ‘the committee that puts on the Vacation Bible School,’ noted Chairwoman Penny Tracy. The committee resolved to expand its outreach to more closely follow its mission statement.

An Open Mic Night will be the first step in that process. It will combine music and a Coffee Klatch to bring the community together. The evening will be open to all ages and it’s hoped it will attract a variety of performances from music to readings or other local talent. “We have a lot of talent in our community,” Penny said. “We’re hoping this is a fun way to reach out to share the gifts and talents that God gave all of us. The Open Mic Night is open to the entire community and surrounding areas to grow in the Lord and to enjoy time together.”

The first Open Mic Night is planned for Saturday, Aug. 9 at 7 p.m. Music will be upstairs, and coffee and donuts served afterward in the fellowship hall. The committee hopes to make this a monthly event. Groups or individuals interested in performing are asked to contact the church office for more information or to sign up. Please call Connie Kelsey at 906 341-6662 or e-mail office@manistiquemethodist.org. The next Education meeting will be on Feb. 7 at 10 am.

### Vitality Committee Update—Connie Kelsey

God’s church is alive and well! Be sure to mark your calendar for the Pancake Supper (Fat Tuesday) on March 4th at 5 PM. All are welcome, invite a friend and enjoy great food and fellowship!

An Earth & Arbor Day Craft event will be held April 26th from 3-5 PM. We are inviting everyone to come make a teacup and/or a birdhouse to give to the residents at our local care facilities for Mother’s Day and Father’s Day! The next Vitality committee meeting will be on February 27 at 10 AM..

### Notes from your Worship Committee

Please remember to sign up for: Usher/Greeter, Altar Flowers, Fellowship and Children’s Sunday School. The stained glass cross, made by William E. Morden many years ago, will remain in the sanctuary. Recent correspondence has confirmed that the family desires that it remain in the sanctuary rather than in their possession.

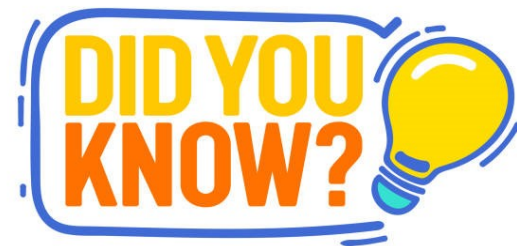
Any of the congregation interested in pulling out their instruments and having a jam session for special music please contact Janet Helmbold.

Before we know it March and Lent will be here. Our annual Lenten Soup and Devotion Dinners begin March 12th at 5:30 PM.

The Ministerial Association will be hosting the Good Friday service here on April 18th. The theme is “The Words from the Cross.”

All are welcome to the Easter Sunday Dinner immediately following the service, hosted by Rita Salter.

Blessings, Candace Haskell

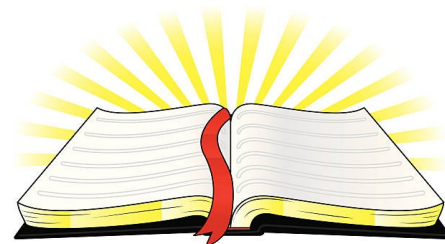


1. How many wings do seraphim have?

- A. 8
- B. 6
- C. 4
- D. 2
- E. 1 1/2

2. What do seraphim do with their wings?

- A. Keep themselves warm.
- B. Fly around.
- C. Cover their faces, hands and feet.
- D. Cover their faces and hands and fly.
- E. Cover their faces and feet and fly.



The answers to both these questions can be found in Isaiah 6:1-2.

## United Women in Faith News



United Women in Faith

Submitted by Char Crosby

United Women in Faith is off to a busy start for the new year. Ideas for a 2025 theme were presented by several members involving spiritual growth and investigating women of faith through the ages. The theme will be refined in a subsequent meeting. Moving on to the Reflection Breakfast, Carol Hollenbeck was suggested as a possible speaker. Later in the spring the Manistique UWF will host the Northern Skies District Spiritual Growth Retreat on May 2-3 at the Comfort Inn. Nominations for the “Person of the Year” will be collected in October and announced at the UWF Sunday service in November. New Stars of Hope will be distributed at the Christmas Tea in December.

The usual UWF considerations of birthdays (2), pasties (7 batches), and reading program (4 participants) were reviewed. The UWF will be making 7 batches of pasties on February (4 on the 12th and 3 on the 13th)!

Before adjourning the meeting, Bette reminded us to “Step up. Love. Lead with passion. You’re not alone. God gives you everything you need.” Even tho Bette confessed, “I don’t know what happened,” and Rita commented, “It looks edible,” the blueberry cake was delicious!

Thanks everyone who helped with the Fellowship Room! The floors have been refinished, the tables and chairs have been cleaned, the nursery has been sanitized and everything is back in order. These tasks have been easier with many helping hands!



### FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONTRIBUTION INFORMATION CONTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN—DECEMBER 2024

GENERAL FUND	\$7,240.65
GENERAL FUND EFTS	\$1,365.00
BUILDING FUND	\$190.00
UMCOR	\$100.00
NOISY OFFERING (God’s Country Community Ministries)	\$53.72

TOTAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DECEMBER 2024 \$8,949.37

YEAR TO DATE CONTRIBUTIONS DECEMBER 2024 \$108,988.44

YEAR TO DATE CONTRIBUTIONS DECEMBER 2023 \$123,675.37

DIFFERENCE -\$14,686.93