

**Alba United Methodist Church**

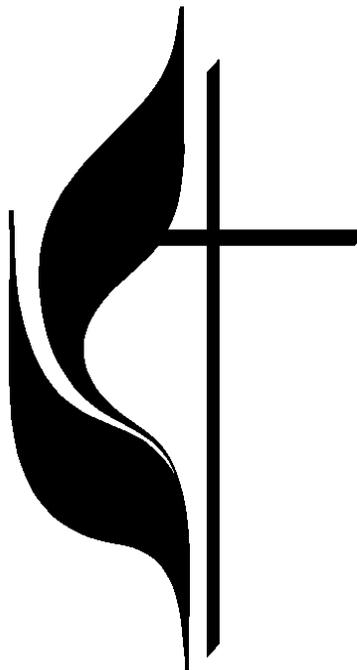
PO Box 136  
5991 Alba Highway  
Alba, MI 49611  
Sunday Service @ 9:30am

Ad Board Meeting - 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of month

**Mancelona United Methodist Church**

PO Box 301  
117 E. Hinman Street  
Mancelona, MI 49659  
231.587.8461  
Sunday Christian Education @ 9:30am  
Sunday Service @ 11:00am

Ad Council Meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month



**NON-PROFIT  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MANCERONA, MI  
PERMIT NO. 9**

**Dated Material – Please Rush - - January/February 2017      Volume 19 #1**

<i>Mancelona Anniversaries</i>	
	January 17 <sup>th</sup> – Don & Ruth Johnson January 26 <sup>th</sup> – Dave & Robin Fisher
	February 13 <sup>th</sup> – Michael & Laurie Allison

## FROM THE A New Beginning



Philippians 4:13

**13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Happy New Year, friends!

# Pastor

How many of you woke up on January 1, and said it's a new year, and it is time to press the reset button? I certainly had those thoughts as the New Year has finally come. I'm going to start over, and have a new beginning.

There was a quote I saw recently, "No one can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending" (Unknown). Although we don't start over, we can begin to make things better in our lives. You see... It's not about us saying I'm going to do this and not do this in 2017. If we have this mindset, we will fall short, and again set ourselves up for failure. What we should be saying is, I'm going to ask the Lord to help me each and every day with the things I struggle with. If we focus more on God and less on the earthy stuff, we will begin to understand that it is God's strength that helps us to overcome those barriers and struggles in our lives.

So as you make all those New Year's Resolutions, keep in mind, you cannot do it on your own and rely on your own strength. What you can do though, is focus more on God in 2017. Make God your priority first before saying I'm going to lose weight, or be a nicer person this year.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me!

Happy New Year!

Pastor Todd

### Dates of interest.

Sunday, February 19 - There will be an Accountable Leadership Workshop. Gary Step will be facilitating. For all leaders and potential leaders in the church. After church on Sunday we will eat pizza, then have our workshop.

Wednesday, March 1st, Ash Wednesday. Pastor will be doing imposition of ashes throughout the day.

Mancelona: 12:00-1:00, 3:00-5:00 PM

Alba: 6:00-7:00 PM

## *Alba Birthdays*

## *Marcelona Birthdays*

5<sup>th</sup> – Annette Marcus  
8<sup>th</sup> – Jeremy Gates  
8<sup>th</sup> – Brooklyn Stevens  
8<sup>th</sup> – Alaina Stevens  
15<sup>th</sup> – Derrick Marsh  
15<sup>th</sup> – Ashley Reynolds  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Cecile Woodward  
25<sup>th</sup> – Ashley Olds



1<sup>st</sup> – Kathy Cameron  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Barbara Castle  
4<sup>th</sup> – Marv Kingsley  
7<sup>th</sup> – Pat Derror  
7<sup>th</sup> – Kathy Johnson  
8<sup>th</sup> – Ruben Mandez-Holman  
10<sup>th</sup> – Ron Aldrich  
10<sup>th</sup> – Braedon Moeke  
15<sup>th</sup> – Jackie Allsopp  
16<sup>th</sup> – Emma Miller  
16<sup>th</sup> – Burt Thompson  
18<sup>t</sup> – Bob Geer  
18<sup>th</sup> – Donna Levely  
19<sup>th</sup> – Warren Shafer  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Mollie Thompson  
24<sup>th</sup> – Diane Lirones  
27<sup>th</sup> – Carol Kingsley  
28<sup>th</sup> – Alex Mandex-Holman  
28<sup>th</sup> -- Dana Proffer  
29<sup>th</sup> – Ken Bronson  
31<sup>st</sup> – Julia Kirby

2<sup>nd</sup> – Terry Olds  
5<sup>th</sup> – Chris Olds  
12<sup>th</sup> – Valeria Rusnell  
13<sup>th</sup> – Penny Coon  
14<sup>th</sup> – Jordan Stevens  
21<sup>st</sup> – Louise Jewell



2<sup>nd</sup> – Martha Jurma  
6<sup>th</sup> – Carolyn Grody  
8<sup>th</sup> – Ronda DelBosque  
8<sup>th</sup> – Denise Nixon  
9<sup>th</sup> – Michael Allison  
15<sup>th</sup> – William Conway  
16<sup>th</sup> – Jim MacArthur  
18<sup>th</sup> – Lynn Cummings  
18<sup>th</sup> – Gage Johnson  
25<sup>th</sup> – Garret Derrer  
25<sup>th</sup> – Cody Derrer  
25<sup>th</sup> – RaeAnn Thompson  
27<sup>th</sup> – Linda Olds

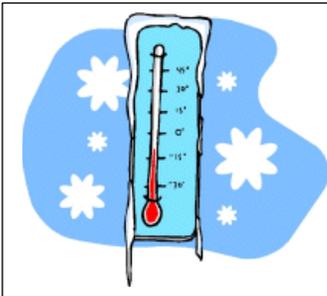
## Trustees News

We had hoped to keep the ramp on the north side of the church open for the winter. Due to the heavy amount of snow fall and the danger of snow sliding from the roof it will be closed for the remainder of the winter. Guests parking in the lot on the north side of the church will be directed to the lower ramp and through the church with directional signs. I ask all church members to be helpful with giving directions if you see guests attending our worship service or community meal. We may need more signs.

The new window for the church kitchen is in but will not be installed until spring. Darn all this snow! Work on the parsonage will also wait until spring.

A big "Thank You" to all who have signed up to shovel at the church. January and February are all filled in. The little gas snow blower is very helpful to keep the lower ramp and walks open.

Laurie Allison



Now that cold weather has finally arrived it is important to keep the thermostats set at 62 degrees, and the door open into the choir room (where the pipes froze and broke). We don't want a repeat the flood! Thanks!

Did you say Rhonda?????? Pastor Todd announced that on January 1<sup>st</sup>, Rhonda Headapohl will be joining our staff as the new Administrative Assistant. She is currently the part-time Administrative Assistant for Kalkaska United Methodist Church for Pastor John Murray.

Past work experience for 26 years had been with 87<sup>th</sup> District Court and Kalkaska Sheriff's Office as Administrative Assistant to the Sheriff. She is currently President of Women of Worship (UMW) and acts as Church Council Recording Secretary in Kalkaska, and assists with Mother Daughter Banquet and Craft Fair.

Although widowed for the last 24 years, she has three grown children, eight (four actual) grandchildren and resides in Kalkaska.

She looks forward to getting to know a new congregation and working with all of us.

Her contact information is:

[helivesforus@outlook.com](mailto:helivesforus@outlook.com)

231-564-1787 (out of service until 2/1/2017)

Office hours are Tuesday-Thursday 1:00-3:00

## COMMUNITY MEAL REPORT

### “We are one body with many members”

As we end another calendar year and look forward to the fifth year of reaching out to serve our community through the weekly Tuesday evening meal, we do so with grateful hearts.

We give thanks for the hard work, enthusiasm, support and love shown by so many in our congregation for others. While we have always had individuals from other churches offering to work along with us, this past year saw a change as two church groups officially joined with us.

We have been blessed with St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church Mission Committee contacting us to see how they could help. They now provide meals on the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday as well as volunteers many other times. Dale Stephenson, Pathway Church member, began working with our Men’s Team and offered to form a team from Pathway Church. They now prepare and serve the third Tuesday meal, formerly taken care of by the Men’s team. We have truly become a “community”.

Beginning in January, Carol Kingsley and Sandy Neumann will be co-chairing the Community Meal Coordinating Committee. Sandy has been a member of the original coordinating committee since the meal began and Carol has been involved since becoming a member of our church family. They are a great team and have assumed many of the “behind the scenes” tasks that keep us going. Please thank them for their willingness to take this ministry as well as the many others who have taken on various responsibilities.

The Community Meal began in March of 2012 as a “leap of faith” and I am confident will continue as long as there is a need to serve God’s people in this way. Jesus said “Feed my lambs” and we have been engaged in doing that.

Jeanette Hayes for the Coordinating Committee

## News From Missions

January & February 2017

Mancelona United Methodist Church turned in 68 shoeboxes this year and Alba United Methodist Church turned in 20 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Our district turned in a total of 207 boxes.

### **Local youth team up to spread the true meaning of Christmas**

The Christmas season is a wonderful time of year. It's a time of year that embodies a certain spirit and "magic" that is different from any other time of year. It is a time of gifts, parties, traditions and special memories. We all look forward to giving and receiving gifts. This year some local youth are learning, or maybe they already understood, that it truly is more blessed to give than to receive.

You've probably heard of Operation Christmas Child. It's a wonderful mission to give Christmas gifts to children all over the world. These children are much like our children. They love to dance and sing and play. They could play all day long. They love to tell stories. They love to listen to stories. They have their favorite foods and foods they wish they never had tasted. They are children, just like our children in so many ways. In other ways, they are nothing like our children. Some have only ever dreamed of going to school. Some of these children have never experienced a warm bathtub full of bubbles. They've never dreamed of video games or a birthday party at the pool. Some have never even experienced receiving a tangible Christmas present. But because of the incredible mission of Operation Christmas Child, many of these children will experience receiving a Christmas gift for the very first time this year.

Millions of people have participated in this great mission over the past 23 years, but for some local youth, it was their very first time. When a mission committee member, Brenda Lockman, from the Mancelona Methodist Church shared her passion for the mission with children in her family, they knew it was something they wanted to do. Two of her nieces had birthday's coming up so they decided to have a birthday party. Instead of gifts for themselves they had their guests bring things to fill the shoeboxes. Twenty-two boxes were packed and headed off to twenty-two precious children somewhere far away. What a wonderful way to kick off the Christmas season, giving to others knowing it's not a holiday exchange. These children will likely never know where their boxes ended up (although sometimes that is possible). Something tells me that won't stop them from doing it again next year!

Check out the mission for yourself at [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org). Take a look at some of the other amazing projects they do around the world and the purpose driving the mission. Have a blessed New Year!

The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone that took a tag off the tree in the Narthex to help Mancelona Families at Christmas time.

Our new Mission Committee for 2017: Gerry Deater, Brenda Lockman, Dean McCulloch, Linda Olds, Jan Patterson and Mary Ann Peterson. We will be meeting soon to decide our mission projects for 2017. We welcome new ideas.

## Finance Team

Last year's first quarter newsletter article from the finance team shared the greatly disappointing fact that our expenses exceeded income by \$4,494 in 2015. Throughout 2016 we danced closely with breaking even, however we ended the year with a negative \$974 balance. While this is a significant improvement it does highlight a disturbing trend by marking the third consecutive year where we failed to cover our church's operations expense. No significant budget increase is planned for 2017 but as usual, if we spend everything budgeted we will be in severe distress.

In January 2017 we will tap into our General Fund Reserve to start the year with a \$0.00 balance. "At this rate, it won't be long before drastic measures are needed to keep our doors open."

Much of 2016 was devoted to VCI (Vital Church Initiative) and the sermon series "Get Their Name." Our year end results show significant improvement but we are not home free yet. Ask yourself what more you can do to grow and ensure the vitality of our church.

Pending Ad Council approval - As a onetime fundraiser: please consider a special "Easter" donation to the church. The staff and teams have done great work in controlling expenses, it is time for the rest of our church family to band together and supplement their efforts.

### Financial Results 2015 and 2016

INCOME	2015	2016
Envelope giving	\$ 76,424	\$ 75,074
Loose plate offering	\$5,911	\$7,259
Other Income (investments and misc)	\$6,491	\$8,655
Charge Church (Alba)	\$12,159	\$11,718
Total Income	\$100,985	\$102,706
Expenses		
Ministry Shares	\$ 12,860	\$ 13,154
Pastoral Ministry	\$51,767	\$51,319
Staff (Org., Sec., Jan.)	\$8,970	\$8,576
Ministries (Worship, Edu, Missions, ...)	\$6,590	\$7,028
Facilities (Church & Parsonage)	\$25,231	\$23,603
Total Expense	\$105,479	\$103,680
Operating Loss (Income – Expenses)	-\$4,494	-\$ 974

The Finance Committee

### 2016 Mission Giving

Blankets	\$ 343.27
Community Love Fund	\$ 253.09
Community Meal Food	\$ 94.99
Community Meal Fund	\$4,068.59
Crop Walk	\$ 278.10
Food Pantry	\$ 163.96
Haiti Hot Lunch	\$ 796.76
Homeless in the United States	\$ 220.00
Hungry Children	\$ 295.00
Labyrinth Mancelona Mission	\$1,166.00
Memorial Garden	\$ 200.00
Memorial Gift	\$1,105.00
Nepal - Tansen Hospital	\$ 212.68
Rainsong Ministry	\$ 321.00
Shalom Income	\$1,120.49
St. Andrews	\$ 106.80
UM Community House	\$ 345.00
UMCOR	\$ 228.00
VBS Project	\$ 180.00
Total	\$11,498.73

## CONNECT & ENCOURAGE & THRIVE

*But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them unless someone is sent to do it? Romans 10:14 (MSG)*

### ***Words from our DS Anita Hahn***

*"Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; things I would ask him to tell me if he were here: scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, stories of Jesus, tell them to me!" (Tell Me the Stories of Jesus, UMH 277)*

*"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" Luke 2:19.*

The Christmas Story is shared in two of the four Gospels. **Matthew** wants us to know the lineage of Christ, the birth and the gifts of the Magi. **Luke** talks about the angels coming to Mary and to Martha. The Angels announce the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist. The prayers of Mary and Zechariah are shared and the Shepherds are the first to arrive at the birth scene. Funny, this magnificent event is not even referred to in **Mark**, but life for Jesus starts at his baptism and **John** starts at the beginning of Creation, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" John 1:1. And then Mark jumps to Jesus' baptism.

The differences found in the four Gospels reminds me of how we each view events with a different set of eyes and life experiences. This fall I met a young man who has a different view of life than mine. As I read him a simple children's story, the niceness of "treating" people well and all will be well oozed like goo out of its pages. It was like a good "Hallmark" story—everything had a happy ending. This young man did not resonate with everything being "nice," in fact, every few words he questioned what I was reading. He even added his own life experiences that defied the story. The story had always seemed so simple—until now.

I've been reading, Mutant Message Down Under, by Marlo Morgan. As she experiences a walkabout in the outback of Australia, she experiences life in such new circumstances that life makes more sense than it ever had before. She realizes how civilization as many of us know it has turned creation against itself and that the rhythm of life—that has been replaced by our modern conveniences—has been so interrupted that it is impossible for us to understand what it would mean to live where no one "owns" the land. We can no longer vision a land where we live at peace with each other and all the pieces and intricacies of Creation. The part that I will remember the most is when she finds herself dealing with bugs! "They crawled into my ears, up my nose, clawed my eyes, and even managed to get past my teeth and enter my throat!" (pages 65-69) Then Marlo learns that everything in Oneness has a purpose—even these awful flies. The leader then shares this insight with her, "They crawl down our ears and clean out the wax and sand that we get from sleeping each night... Yes, they climb up our nose and clean it out too." At this point her view of the flies changes and instead of seeing awful-she sees how they are useful and the next time a swarm of flies comes, she allows herself to mentally imagine herself back home at a health spa! When the flies left, she allowed herself to return-clean-to the Outback.

Our life experiences bring us to the manger's edge and are a part of our Christmas traditions and practices that will wake us up on Christmas morning.

For me, this Christmas means that everyone will be home! Wesley is traveling home from Australia so that he can renew his VISA and return to finish his studies. Andrew (freshman) will be home from MSU. Lisa (freshman at TC West HS) is continuing to help us all stay sane and Edris (working to complete his flight training) continues to bless our family! And after Christmas, my mom will join the fullness of our home! Hallelujah!!! I've never been so excited. I'm ready to share meals, play games and bake cookies! My guess is this is "my" picture of the next few weeks, not anyone else's—even those living in my home!

So what does it mean to anticipate life experiences while being aware of how you look upon any situation will differ much from the person sitting next to you?

What does it mean to encounter the story of a babe—lying in a manger—to be salvation to All when poverty, displacement, and despair are a natural part of everyday? What does it mean to encounter Christmas this year when the story of the season has only been presents and Santa? And what does it mean when it is simply another day of the year because the culture does not honor nor understand a method of keeping and planning for time? And what does it mean to encounter a Child when you are the child who is lost, displaced or misunderstood by our Western Culture and for some reason (good reason) you don't fit in and you don't want to?

And how will you share your story of Christmas this year? How will you allow others to share their stories without judgement or presumptions? Will you encounter the Holy in the midst of the broken and lost – realizing that it may be you who is the most broken?

**What does it mean to live at one with God and one with Creation?** Maybe the Book of John speaks more about the birth of Christ than I previously thought.

At the heart of Christmas is the love of a Savior who knew God, who was God, who is God—and there is nothing we can do to change that.

What if Christmas isn't able to be neatly wrapped up in a package with a bow? What if Christmas is messy and it means listening to another's story so that you can meet the God of Hope that they know and you can share your piece of the story, too. Maybe in the end—our image of Christ will increase and we will more fully understand the glory of the Angel's song!

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!!

*Anita K. Hahn*