

## FROM THE



## Pastor

### God's Invitation to His Kingdom

It seems like yesterday since we had last year's November/December Newsletter. Indeed, time flies. As we enter the Advent

Season, I want us to reflect on the invitation to God's kingdom.

God's invitation to His kingdom is a central theme in the Bible, and it reveals the depth of His love and desire for a relationship with us. In Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus tells a parable about a king who invites guests to a wedding banquet, symbolizing God's invitation to His kingdom. As believers, we are recipients of this divine invitation, and in this devotion, we will explore its significance and how we should respond.

**The Divine Invitation:** The parable in Matthew 22 shows us that God graciously extends an invitation to everyone. It's a call to be in His presence and share in His joy. Just like the king in the parable, God is persistent in His invitation. He sends messengers, representing prophets, teachers, and circumstances, to call us to Him. Reflect on your own life and how you have experienced God's invitation. How have you heard His call, and how have you responded?

**The Rejection and Indifference:** Some guests in the parable rejected the invitation, reflecting those who turn away from God's offer of salvation and relationship. Indifference can also hinder our response to God's invitation. We get busy with worldly concerns and miss the opportunity to be in His presence. Take a moment to examine your own heart. Have there been times when you've been indifferent to God's invitation or even rejected it? Seek His forgiveness and renew your commitment to Him.

**The Inclusiveness of God's Grace:** The king in the parable invited both the "good" and the "bad," signifying that God's grace is extended to all,

regardless of our past. God's invitation is not based on our merit; it is an act of His love and mercy. He wants a relationship with us as we are. Thank God for His inclusive grace. Consider those in your life who may not seem deserving but need to hear His invitation. How can you share this message of grace with them?

**The Garment of Righteousness:** In the parable, the guest without the proper wedding attire is cast out. This emphasizes the importance of faith and righteous living as a response to God's invitation. As believers, we are called to clothe ourselves with the righteousness of Christ. It's not enough to accept the invitation; we must live transformed lives. Reflect on your own walk with Christ. Are you wearing the garment of righteousness? Is there anything in your life that needs to be renewed and transformed in His light?

**The Chosen Few:** The parable concludes with the idea that "few are chosen." This reminds us that while many are invited, not all respond with genuine faith. Our response to God's invitation is critical. Being chosen is not about favoritism but about the condition of our hearts and our willingness to accept His call. Spend time in prayer, asking God to strengthen your faith and commitment to Him. Seek to be among the chosen few who respond wholeheartedly to His invitation.

*Finally, I wish you Merry Christmas and Happy New year 2024. God bless you!*

Rev Dr Douglas Obwoye





United  
Women  
in Faith

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN/UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH NEWS

### ***We Have a New Name!***

At our last UMW meeting, we voted to change our official name to Mancelona United Women in Faith. Why? Our parent organization has been moving this way for well over a year now. (from their website): *United Methodist Women is now United Women in Faith! The move is part of a refreshing of the organization that includes a new logo and an array of new and improved programs to nurture current members and welcome new women to join to put their love in action on behalf of women, children, and youth.* In addition, we will now be part of the Northern Skies District which encompasses groups from the upper regions of the Lower Peninsula and the entire Upper Peninsula.

### **Annual Harvest Supper Report**

Our annual Harvest Supper was held on September 14, and it was a great success! This event is a major fundraiser for our group, and we ended up making a net profit of \$2,034.71, which will be used for mission giving. The Fellowship Hall was full of community patrons who left with bellies full of roast beef, squash, mashed potatoes with gravy, tomatoes, coleslaw, and homemade pie. We also took orders for several takeouts. Thank you to everyone who helped with this event!

### **Northern Waters District – United Women in Faith Celebration Event**

On October 7 we hosted the annual celebration for the Northern Waters District (NWD) – United Women in Faith. The event was very successful, and the group's president Julia Hulka noted: *Thanks so much Mancelona for being such good and welcoming hosts.* Our guest speaker Tara DeGroot spoke on homelessness and donations were also taken for the Iron Vault program in our own community.



### **Upcoming Fundraisers**

A Craft Show will be held on November 18 (9:00 – 3:00 pm) at Mancelona Elementary

School. Our group will once again participate. We welcome donations of your crafts from sewing projects to paintings to card making to ??? – Use your imagination! See Carol Kingsley if you would like to donate your crafty creations.

On December 9 (10 am to 3 pm or until sold out) we will be having a Bake Sale at Mancelona's Family Fare. Jackie Bates is our chairperson, and she would be happy to accept your tasty treats!

From these major fundraisers (Harvest Supper, Craft Show, and Bake Sale) we will donate funds to a variety of organizations locally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally. We also welcome your thoughts on worthy charitable groups that may benefit from our outpouring of giving.

### **November and December Meetings**



New members for our United Women in Faith group are always welcome!

*Here's what's coming up:*

#### **November 8 – 1 pm – Fellowship Hall**

Ruth Johnson will be leading our program on the World Thank Offering. In addition, guest speaker Fawn Southwell will be sharing stories of her family's ministry work in Hungary where her husband Mike serves as principal at the International Christian School of Budapest. Fawn's primary role is to support women's ministry. We will also be preparing Christmas cards for church members and friends who are unable to come to church or who are absent in the winter.

**Annual December Soup and Salad Luncheon**  
**December 13, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Wendy Aldrich will be chairperson. This free luncheon is open to anyone in our community and is an opportunity for us to say thank you to our Mancelona Public Schools staff, Village of Mancelona staff, and others who serve our area. All are welcome to attend and taste some yummy homemade soup, salads, and cookies.

YES, we are a busy group! We love serving God with hands and hearts. From providing altar flowers to purchasing a new chair rack for Fellowship Hall (thank you Sue Thomas) to cleaning and reorganizing rooms throughout our church; we are **indeed** *United Women in Faith!*

*Thank you for all your support!*

**UPCOMING UWFAITH MEETINGS**

- ✓ Wednesday, November 8 – 1:00 pm
- ✓ Wednesday, December 13 – 11:00 am-1:00 pm Soup & Salad
- ✓ Wednesday, January 10 – 1:00 pm

Submitted by Ellen Whitehead - UWFaith Secretary

**You are cordially invited**

**Wednesday, December 13**

**Come any time between 11 am & 1 pm.**

Mancelona United Women in Faith will sponsor a free luncheon for our church and community. We hope you can join us!

The luncheon will be held in Fellowship Hall.

**Veteran's Day Recognition**  
**Honoring Our Veterans**



On Sunday, November 12, Nurture and Outreach will

honor and offer thanks to our church family who are veterans, a spouse of a veteran, or have a family member currently serving in the armed services. We will do this in a special way via a video presentation that Rhonda and Mike Allen have graciously volunteered, once again, to put together. We hope all veterans and their family members will be our guests for Second Sunday Potluck after church on November 12. All past participants will be included in the video. Please contact Carol Kingsley at 231.360.9029 (phone or text) if you would like to add a new participant.

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**“Young at Heart”**  
**Women’s Ministry Group**

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Our “Young at Heart” women’s ministry group had their first get together on Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup> in our Church Fellowship Hall. The 21 ladies in attendance brought food and prizes galore. There was conversation and laughter as the women ate and played competitive rounds of Bingo. Several members of the church attended. Some brought friends and we even had visitors from a neighboring town.

The purpose of this group is to give Christian women an opportunity to spend much needed time in fellowship together.

Our next event will occur during the late morning and afternoon of Saturday, December 2nd. Please put it on your calendar and stay tuned for details.

Submitted by Lori Derror

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We have been blessed with generous mission offerings:

- ✓ August “Stuff the bus” was \$208.04.
- ✓ September “Student Assistant Fund” was \$242.

As of press date, our mission offering for the October “Community Meal” is \$637.00. This will be updated at the end of the month which will reflect the matching funds from someone in our church who will match our October Community Meal Mission offering.

### **November – Habitat for Humanity**

*At Habitat for Humanity, we build. We build because we believe that everyone everywhere should have a healthy, affordable place to call home. When a family helps build or improve a place they can call home, they are also building a better community and a better life for themselves.*

Your donation will help families in need of a decent place to build long-term financial security with an affordable, stable home. Families have more to spend on food, medicine, child care, education, and other essentials. Your support can help us do more in all the many ways that Habitat builds. Thanks to you, Habitat is transforming lives around the world.

### **December – Christmas Family**

Our Mission Committee will get the name of a Mancelona family. Tags will be on the tree in the Narthex starting December 3.

*We, on the Missions Committee, are grateful for your generosity to others within the community and around the world. The Bible teaches us to share our blessings and to be generous to others.*

Submitted by Brenda Lockman, Mission Chair

## **November is the month for giving thanks.....**



Photo credit: Ellen Whitehead

Throughout this newsletter, so many have shared thankfulness for all that our church family and community does!

Sue Thomas quietly devotes her time to our Church Library. The Library is a part of the Fireplace Room which was updated in memory of Jan Hanyak a few years ago. What a wonderful respite for anyone who uses our church!

Thank you Sue for your long-time dedication to our Church Library!

**“Don’t Be a Sunday Church.”**

**Pastor Douglas Obwoye**  
**September 24, 2023**

## **Nurture and Outreach**

Ellen Whitehead has stepped down as the Nurture and Outreach Co-Chair. Ellen was chair for many years prior to Jackie Bates agreeing to co-chair a couple of years ago. Robin Fisher will now co-chair with Jackie.

Yes, we have Ellen to thank for so many great adventures, kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing, sleigh riding, concert attendance, eating.....you name it!

As someone recently shared with me: *She really has worked very hard to bring the church family together and provide opportunities for everyone to get to know each other better.*

Ellen has stuck by our side planning all kinds of fun activities through at least three pastors! *Thank you, Ellen!*

Co-chairs: Jackie Bates and Robin Fisher



## Community Meal

September and October have been bittersweet as our long-time dishwasher John Sterner retired and will be moving to South Carolina to be with his daughters. Several years ago, after John lost his wife, he felt a need to volunteer, and, faithfully for many years stopped on Tuesdays after leaving his job in Gaylord.

The sweet part was that in just a matter of days we were able to engage Jack Porter as our new dishwasher! Jack attends our Church and we feel blessed to have Jack make the transition so smoothly.

After many years of serving Community Meal, Margaret Chapman is taking a rest! Margaret has faithfully served for a very long time, and we do appreciate Margaret's devotion.

September and October meals have run a gamut of entrees.....from pizza, burgers, meatloaf, chicken drumsticks, and goulash. Our cooking teams have done an outstanding job! Cooking burgers in 90-degree heat!

Tuesdays in September and October, averaged 51 meals while take outs averaged 21. Pleased that we know folks are getting extra meals each week. However, we do encourage our cooking teams to cook for approximately 60 each week to keep our overall costs down. As we all know, sometimes it's hard to keep a recipe to a certain number.

Due to the generosity of Troy Orman, Aaron and Amanda Kruger of Papa K's, Pizza Night was a hit with pizza and cheesy bread.

Our Community Meal funding is running low. Our Church October Mission was to collect money for Community Meal. All donations will be doubled due to an anonymous benefactor from our church.

We are fortunate to be able to purchase food from Manna at drastically reduced prices. We can only purchase what they stock. We get canned vegetables, fruits, tuna, and chicken; pasta; frozen meats; and dehydrated potato choices. We have another generous anonymous donor who donates

\$2000 into our account at Manna. That generally last for nearly a year.

We have a small limited church account. The funds in it are generated by the Donation Jar at the meals, occasional donations from individuals within our church, other churches, and from the community.

ALL other expenses generated by the Community Meal are paid from the church account. We pay Lou Patton for a couple hours every week. She is there every week to command the clean-up. All other "jobs" are volunteer.

Our volunteers are the key to the success of the Community Meal. We are blessed that many of our cooking teams donate extra items that they want for their meal. *That is very generous and appreciated!* Each week, we are grateful for the milk donation from one of our volunteers and for years have benefitted from Shirley's weekly bread donations.

Sandy will be picking up Thanksgiving pies from Food Rescue in Traverse City as a special treat!

As we have done in the past, Community Meal will close on Tuesday, December 26 and Tuesday, January 2.

*Wishing all our volunteers and guests a blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and 2024!*

Submitted by Sandy Neumann  
and Carol Kingsley, Community Meal Co-Chairs

### Community Meal Holiday Hours

In order that our volunteers may have time to spend with their family and friends, there will be no Community Meals on the following Tuesdays:

December 26 and January 2

# What's Happening

Each week (usually Monday) an email is sent noting prayers, praises, and announcements, that have been shared in our service on Sunday, and it will include Rev. Douglas's Gospel Lesson, Music, and Message for the week which is posted on Facebook. If you wish to be on that email list, send an email request to [carolkingsley62@gmail.com](mailto:carolkingsley62@gmail.com) Text or call 231.360.9029

RADA Kathy Johnson will be selling a few RADA items at the Craft show on November 18 and will be taking orders through the following week. Catalogs are in the Narthex, on the table nearest the Conference Room.

**Bible Study after Church in the Sanctuary. Usually, every 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> (if applicable) Sunday**

**Sunday, November 5** – Set your clock back.

**Wednesday, November 8** – 1:00 pm – UWFaith – Fellowship Hall

**Sunday, November 12** - Our Church honors our veterans. We will honor all our veterans from past years. If you would like to add a veteran, please check with Carol Kingsley. Potluck in Fellowship Hall following our service honoring our veterans.

**Saturday, November 18** - Annual Mancelona Community Craft Show – Our UMFaith will have a booth. *Start crafting!* Questions: Contact Carol Kingsley

**Sunday, November 19** – Hanging of the Greens after Church with Snacks & Chat (3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. this month.)

**Sunday, December 3** – Tags on tree for Christmas Family

**December 9 - 10:00 am - 3:00 pm or until sold out** -UMFaith Bake Sale at Mancelona Family Fare. Your baked good donations will be very much appreciated! Questions: Check with Jackie Bates.

**Sunday, December 10** - Potluck in Fellowship Hall.  
**Wednesday, December 13 - 11:00-1:00** – Soup and Salad Luncheon provided by the UWFaith.

**December 24** – 11:00 am – Sanctuary Service

**December 24** - 7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service.

**December 26** – No Community Meal

**January 2** - No Community Meal

**Friday, January 5, 2024** - Jan/Feb-Newsletter



## Alba

Robert & Kathy Olds – November 8

DJ & Ashley Reynolds – November 29

Kathy and Chuck Blasko – December 28

## Mancelona

Bob & Jackie Humphrey – November 5

David & Amy Derrer – November 24

Jack & Jan Patterson – December 7

Dean & Cindy McCulloch – December 12

Ken & Brenda Lockman – December 30



## Poinsettias

Our UW/Faith will be doing poinsettias in memory of a loved one.

Please place your poinsettia in the Altar area starting December 3.

Use the sign up sheet on the table as you enter the Sanctuary if you would like to have the name of the person(s) you wish to remember for your poinsettia.

Acknowledgement will be on the video screen from December 17-24<sup>th</sup>.

We encourage you to take your poinsettia home on January 7.



All the exterior doors have been refurbished at the church. They look great! The next step is replacing the hardware and having all doors keyed alike. *Thank you, Troy and Larry.*

Troy also added some sloping roofing panels over the furnace room on the east side of the church. I'm hoping this will deflect rain and snow and eliminate water in the furnace room after heavy rains.

We also had a slow/stopped up drain in the half bath at the parsonage, and a toilet that needed attention. The slow drain was more than snaking out a clog. A galvanized pipe in the basement had to be replaced. It was original to the house and completely plugged. Larry and Keith took care of both the drain and leaking toilet. *Thank you!*

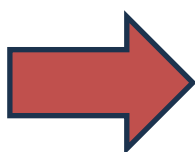
Doug Derrer mowed at the church hopefully for the last time this fall. *Thank you, Doug!*

We have contracted with Doug Hicks for snow removal for the winter. Doug has a tractor with a blower which I'm hoping will eliminate the torn-up lawn in the spring from plowing with a truck. Doug and I agreed on \$125 per plow. Last year our cost was \$150 per plow plus a 10% surcharge for diesel fuel.

Mike Allison will service the snowblower at the parsonage and at the church soon. They are both due to have an oil change. The church snowblower has a broken cotter pin (not sure if that's the correct terminology) that will be repaired.

A sidewalk shoveling sign-up sheet will be posted in the Narthex soon. A reminder, the north upper ramp will be closed once we get snow. The lower ramp will be kept open for the winter to enter the church from the north.

Submitted by Laurie Allison- Trustee Chair



### Daylight Savings Time

Sunday, November 5 - Set your clock back at 2:00 am or....

## Sunday, December 24

*Two services:*

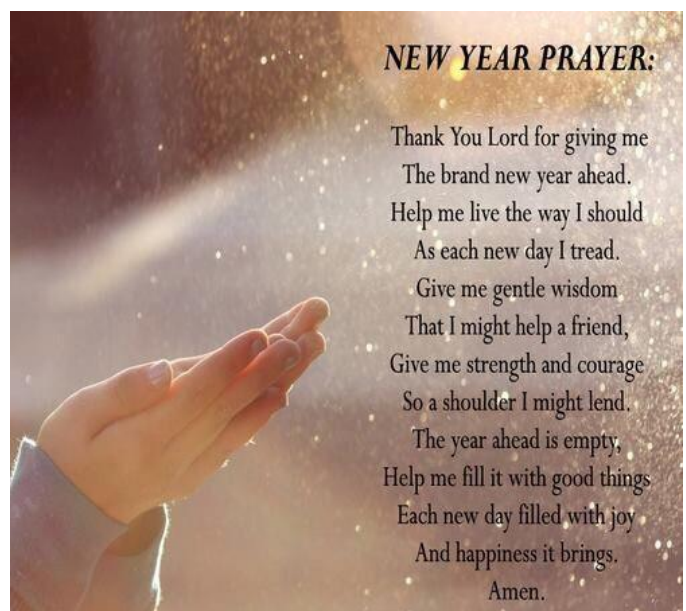
11:00 am Sanctuary Service

7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service



*Join us for our Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary at Mancelona United Methodist Church.*

## Welcome 2024!



### NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me  
The brand new year ahead.  
Help me live the way I should  
As each new day I tread.  
Give me gentle wisdom  
That I might help a friend,  
Give me strength and courage  
So a shoulder I might lend.  
The year ahead is empty,  
Help me fill it with good things  
Each new day filled with joy  
And happiness it brings.  
Amen.

**Mancelona United Methodist Church**  
 PO Box 301  
 117 E. Hinman Street  
 Mancelona, MI 49659  
 231.587.8461  
 Sunday Service @ 11:00am

Ad Council Meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month/Odd  
 Months at 4PM



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

**Dated Material – Please Rush - - November/December 2023      Volume 25 #6**



| <b>Alba</b>  | <b>Mancelona</b>   |  |
|--|--|--|
| Scott Coon – November 6<br>Cheryl Olds – November 10<br>Hailey Gapinski – November 14<br>Ruth Ann Gates – November 16<br>Jeannie Marsh – November 27<br>Terry Gapinski – December 3<br>Ron Kenny – December 4<br>Lea Kenny – December 12<br>Bob Marsh – December 13<br>Gary Zimpfer – December 19<br>Grace Smith – December 24<br>Judy Zimpfer – December 30 | Margaret Chapman – November 1<br>Bridged Mochama – November 1<br>Ronald Oyer – November 1<br>Kathy Shuman – November 2<br>Jackie Humphrey – November 5<br>Robin Fisher – November 7<br>Alexis Deater – November 11<br>Mike Allen – November 13<br>Wendy Aldrich – November 14<br>Rhonda Allen – November 16<br>Sandy Churchill – November 16<br>Sarah Nixon – November 17<br>Patti Dykhous – November 19<br>Judy Plunkett – November 21<br>Beth McKaig – November 26 | Jackie Bates – December 4<br>Brenda Lockman – December 4<br>Ryan Naumcheff – December 18<br>Jason Naumcheff – December 23<br>Kenneth Proffer – December 24<br>Dave Whitehead – December 28 |