



# The Messenger

December 2024

*We live to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ!*

**Memorial United Methodist Church, 1920 Lake Shore Drive, Gladstone, Michigan 49837**

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Mon. – Thur., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



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Mon. and Thur., 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Many of our United Methodist hymns were written by Charles Wesley. His most popular Christmas carol is “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” His second most popular carol is “Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus.” The lyrics for this carol were all Charles’, but the melody was written by Rowland Huw Prichard, a loom-tender for the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company. The tune has been named “Hyfrydol” and has been used for other songs.

Many times, we sing old familiar carols and forget to listen to or understand the true meaning of the words. I thought it would be a good idea to visit this old familiar carol written by one of the founding fathers of Methodism and see the theology and thought he put into this favorite carol.

Here are the lyrics, in case you don’t have a hymnal.

*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.*

“Come, thou long-expected Jesus” begins this song. The ancient saints did not know that our Savior and Messiah’s name would be Jesus, yet they longed for the Messiah to come and His birth was anticipated.

“Born to set thy people free.” Here Wesley tells us what Jesus came for. He came as a redeemer. He came as a deliverer. He came to buy his people back from their bondage, and so the work of the Redeemer was that of deliverer: to “set his people free.”

“From our sins and fears release us.” Here Wesley tells us what Jesus came to deliver us from: from our sin, from our guilt, from our fear of condemnation. Jesus the Messiah, our Savior, came to deliver us from sin and misery, and from the dread of God’s judgement.

“Let us find our rest in Thee.” In this phrase, Wesley is asking us to make sure that the hope of our salvation is in Jesus the Messiah alone. The only place that we have to go for refuge, for rest, for redemption from our sins is in Jesus Christ, and we sing it in that phrase, “let us find our rest in thee.”

The fifth phrase in this stanza is “Israel’s strength and consolation.” This reminds us that Jesus is the fulfillment of all those Old Testament messianic prophecies promising that one day Messiah would come and strengthen, and comfort and restore God’s ancient people, Israel. In this phrase, Wesley has us acknowledging that Jesus the Messiah is Israel’s strength and consolation.

Jesus is not only Israel’s strength and consolation; the sixth phrase tells us that he is “Hope of all the earth.” Jesus is not only the Redeemer of God’s ancient people of Israel; he is the hope of the Gentiles, of all peoples. He is Savior, as Paul would say, “of both Jew and Greek.” He is the Savior of all.

The seventh phrase of the first verse “Dear Desire of every nation” reminds us that Jesus the Messiah is the one, the only one, who can answer the need, the deepest need, of every land and every people. He is the hope of salvation for every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Finally, the eighth phrase “Joy of every longing heart,” tells us that Jesus is the joyful answer to the heart longing for peace with God. If there is a heart that longs for peace with God, for reconciliation with God, for the communion to be restored with God, Jesus is the only one who can give a heart that joy.

Now to look at the other verse I shared with you. As you can see this carol is rich in theology. We are sometimes too familiar with it to appreciate its true meaning.

It begins with “born, thy people to deliver.” Jesus was born. He became human. He was incarnate for the purpose of our redemption. That was the purpose of his being born into this world.

The very next words are “born a child, and yet a king.” This phrase presents one of those ironies of the Christmas story. Jesus was born as a child – obscure, unlooked for by His contemporaries – yet the king of His people.

The eleventh statement is “born to reign in us forever.” Jesus’ work was to establish His reign, His rule, in His people. His purpose was to establish the reign of God in us.

Next is a very familiar phrase – “now Thy gracious kingdom bring.” Each week we pray the Lord’s Prayer together and we pray “Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.” This is like a petition that Jesus’ reign come to us now. It’s like saying, “Lord Jesus, come and reign among us. Come and reign in us now.”

The next phrase is “by thine own eternal Spirit.” This is recognition that if Christ is going to reign in us, the only way He’s going to reign in us is through the Holy Spirit. And so, Wesley petitions the Holy Spirit to work in us to establish the reign of Jesus Christ.

Now onto the next phrase: “rule in all our hearts alone.” This is a petition for Christ to be the only Lord in the lives of His people. There are times we struggle, yet we are his people.

“By thine all-sufficient merit,” is the next phrase. This is a petition for God to save his people by the merit of Jesus Christ. It acknowledges that only Jesus’ work, only Jesus’ perfection, only his perfect obedience can save us. Our merits cannot save us, they will only condemn us; our works cannot save us, they will only condemn us. But Christ’s work, Christ’s fulfillment of the Law, Christ’s perfect life, His death on our behalf fulfilling the penal sanctions of the Law – these things save us, and so we sing this petition; “Lord, save us by thine all-sufficient merit.”

And finally, the last phrase: “Raise us to thy glorious Throne.” This calls on Jesus, by his own merit and grace, to completely save us and to bring us into everlasting communion with the living God. Now that is something to sing to God.

I know this is a bit wordy for the newsletter, but I feel that it is important for us to remember our Wesleyan heritage especially as we come into this glorious season. May God Bless you all this Christmas season and every day.

Shalom,  
Pastor Terri

**newsletter deadline:  
Sunday, December 29**

## Links to Worship

Find an up-to-date schedule for activities, links to on-line worship, and our current prayer list on the church website: [www.gladstonechurch.org](http://www.gladstonechurch.org). You’re welcome to call the office with questions: 428-9311, or email: [mumc@gladstonechurch.org](mailto:mumc@gladstonechurch.org). Worship information, links, livestreaming, and videos are also on YouTube and Facebook:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBY-ZTh99gQBtHG3n2kbyuQ>

<https://www.facebook.com/Memorial-United-Methodist-Church-of-Gladstone-MI-117593394926699/>

If you know a young person who would like to participate in our **Christmas Pageant** on Dec. 22, please speak with Peggy French and bring that person on Dec. 15 to try on a costume during Sunday School.

## Christmas Services

Sunday, Dec. 22, will be our “Family Oriented” Christmas service at the regular **10:30 morning time**.

Please let the church office know of any children or youth who would like to share a special musical piece or read something on Dec. 22.

Our candlelight Christmas Eve service is at 9 p.m. on Dec. 24.

## Advent/Christmas Offering

Fifty percent of the offerings marked for Advent or Christmas will be sent to MDS Community Action Agency’s Walk for Warmth. All money donated stays in the Delta County community for our friends and neighbors with heating insecurities.



## Christ Tree



The Christ Tree, located in the Narthex, is available for donations for a family/person in need during Christmas. Simply follow the instructions located on the table by the tree. We will be taking donations from December 1-15. If you know of someone or a family in need, please contact Pastor Terri. This is available for all ages whether a member of the church or not.

### Prayer List

Ukraine, Israel, and Palestine

Family of Dan Arts, Sr.	Mindy A.
Beth and Sarah Benson	Lisa Richer Barta
Family of Cindi Blahnik	Lorna Benson
Donald Besaw	Kade Botsford
Tom Butch	Nancy Campbell
Saylor Carlson	Bud and Pat Clark
Bette DeRoeck	Dottie Ford
Tom Ford	Ian Goldi
Nancy Grondine	Julie Gudwer
Shannon Hagen	
Matt Hampton	Nancy Harger
Family of Herb Heger	Caroline Hart
Walt Houghton	Kathy Howard
Jim Hubbard	Hueneman family
Chris Jensen	Gail Johnivan
Dorell Kirschner	Barb Lehman
Christopher Lund	Toni Marchese
Rebecca Marchak	Louis Martin
Devin Messina	Jeanette Mineau
Helen Palo	Eric Phillips
Rodney Potvin and family	Josiah Pryor
Kris R.	Jordan R.
Mrs. Craig Seckinger	Debbie Rosen
Thad	Pam Thorbahn
Peyton Williams	Stephen Williams
Liveah Wils	Family of Linda Reeves Houghton



Share your **RED** poinsettia with Memorial in worship. If you wish to honor or memorialize a loved one with your plant, complete the pink form on the long table by the front door and turn it in to the church office by Dec. 18. Then have your poinsettia to the church by Saturday, Dec. 21.

**Christmas Tree** to give away in the area where people hang up their coats.

### Workshop “How to Spot Fraud”

Dylan Messina, who has a degree in Cyber Security, will lead a workshop titled **How to Spot Fraud** on Sunday, Dec. 15, after worship. He invites you to bring your phone, tablet, or other electronic devices.

### Finance Report

Our giving for the general fund for November totaled \$15,267.00. Expenditures for the month were approximately \$14,000. Please give regularly so that all commitments may be met that we are responsible for.

**2025 Pledge cards** are available on the table by the front door.

**2025 Offering envelopes** If you would like a box of offering envelopes, please take a box from in front of the display cabinet and print your name next to your box’s number on the sign-up sheet.



12/2 Regina Stock	12/17 Justin Johnson
12/3 Tom Butch	Nannette Martin
12/5 Kole Desotelle	12/20 Judy Tochterman
12/6 Bill Buchmiller	12/21 Isabel Campbell
12/8 Mary Moore	Isaac Lagina
12/10 Gail Johnivan	Sarah Myers
12/11 Addy St. Aubin	12/22 Steve Maulding
12/13 Kiera Donovan	12/26 Lindsey Taylor
Ally St. Aubin	12/27 Brantlee Marklin
Amy St. Aubin	12/28 Melissa Johnson
	12/29 Susan Bratonia
	12/30 Marta LaPlant

**Decorating the church for Christmas!** Please stay after worship on Dec. 1 to help decorate and/or return on Monday at 5:30 p.m. to finish decorating.

**Lakestate Industries** needs wax (like from old candles) to manufacture their Yooper Fire Starters. Please place wax in the bin under the long table by Memorial’s front door.

**Bay de Noc Choral Society** will perform their concert on Sunday, Dec. 1, at 1:30 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Escanaba.

