

The Messenger

December 2025

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.



Pastor Terri Branstrom (906) 280-2993 tlbran@hotmail.com
Mon. and Thur.. 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Around May 1977 my husband and I received the wonderful news that we were going to become parents. We were beyond the moon with excitement. Our families were also very excited for us.

When I think about that time for us and our families, I can't help compare it to the announcement that Mary had conceived and was going to have a child. I think the announcement would have been met with a bit of a different reaction for several reasons. First, she was unwed. Yes, engaged to Joseph but not married. She must have wondered how Joseph was going to react. Second, how do you explain to their families that the child is not Joseph's but the Son of God. I can hear them now saying. "Yea, right. Sure!!"

It is no surprise that Mary traveled to see her cousin Elizabeth to put some distance between her and all that and get some insight into how humans, specifically Joseph, families, and God work. I can only imagine what Joseph was thinking and feeling until he was visited by one of God's messengers in a dream. And families—we can only imagine how both Joseph and Mary's families reacted to the unlikely news that Mary was pregnant with God's Son. We can imagine what they really thought.

Elizabeth was an older, wiser woman, and she would have been able to be a great support for Mary during this time of uncertainty. She could have shared with Mary her story of how she and Zechariah would have a boychild who would prepare the way for Mary's child, the Messiah.

Today we accept the story of how God came to us in the form of a boy-child to show us the love that God has for humankind. For centuries God had tried to explain how much love God had for us and how we were to treat one another, but we humans can sometimes be a bit dense and think we are the One in control and know everything.

You may have noticed that even with the example of Jesus Christ, God's Son, we still have messed things up here on earth. We still don't follow Christ's example of peace, mercy, forgiveness, and hope. We don't treat one another as we should, nor do we share with others the love God has given us.

Each year we celebrate the arrival of a tiny little boy-child that is the only Son of our God. This celebration is a good thing. It reminds us of a wonder of God's love that came to us in human form to show us how to live in God's way. We forget too quickly about God's love for ALL humankind.

This year, as we celebrate the wonder of the season, remember to keep the love of God in your heart and share it with others.

~ Pastor Terri

Links to Worship

Find an up-to-date schedule for activities, links to online worship, and our current prayer list on the church website: www.gladstonechurch.org. You're welcome to call the office with questions: 428-9311, or email: 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/

Sunday Volunteers

Please sign up on the bulletin board to:

- Serve communion
- Usher & Greet
- Bring a treat
- Host coffee hour
- Read scripture
- Light the Advent Wreath or read the Advent reading during the worship service.

To donate to Memorial U.M. Church through Tithely, focus the camera on your smartphone at the QR code below and follow the directions that appear on your phone.



Newsletter deadline: Dec. 26



Share your WHITE poinsettia with Memorial in worship. If you wish to honor or memorialize a loved one with your plant, complete the form on the long table just inside the church's front door, and return

the form to the church office by Dec. 17. Then order your poinsettia from whichever florist you choose and have it to the church by Saturday, Dec. 20.

The Pasty Sale netted \$4,773.13 which was split 90% to the General Fund and 10% to Missions. A huge THANK YOU to organizer **Denise Messina** and all the many volunteers who helped this year!

The "Mom2Mom Sale" brought to us new this year by Peggy French was very successful, bringing in \$200 for the General Fund and \$315 for Missions. In addition to this, a number of the vendors donated some of their leftover wares, which were split between our clothes closet and God's Country Community Ministry. (We always need more kids clothes in our Clothes Closet.) We will be hosting another Mom2Mom Sale on April 11, 2026.

The 2026 pledge drive is wrapping up. If you have not yet done so, please prayerfully consider what you will pledge for 2026 and then bring/send your pledge card to the church office. Thank you!

Two Advent Studies beginning now:

- A Child Is Born by Rabbi Amy-Jill Levine. Discover the fascinating connections between birth narratives in the Old Testament and the Nativity of Jesus during this 4-week study on Sundays after worship.
- The Journey by Adam Hamilton on Mondays at 5:30 p.m. is also the preaching/worship theme that Pastor Terri will be following this December.

The Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, Dec. 21, at the regular 10:30 worship service. Please let Lisa know as soon as possible anyone of any age who would like to participate. **Adults and teens** are needed to read scripture or narrations. **Children** will be fitted for costumes during Sunday School the next several weeks. We also hope to practice a song or two. Please bring your children & grandchildren as regularly as possible these next several weeks.

Pastor Terri's family will once again be preparing a **scrumptious dinner** for after the program. Please sign up <u>now</u> on the bulletin board if you plan on attending the meal.

New Worship Opportunity

The 3rd Sunday of every month at 1:30, Pastor Terri and Kathy Young lead worship at Lakeview Assisted Living, 1100 N. Lake Shore Dr. We invite you to join them in worshiping with the residents there.

Advent/Christmas Offering

Offerings marked for Advent or Christmas will be sent to MDS Community Action Agency's Walk for Warmth. All money donated stays in Delta County for our friends and neighbors with heating insecurities.



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 1-14. 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.

2026 Offering envelopes If you would like a box of offering envelopes, please take a box from the small black cabinet in the narthex and print your name next to your box's number on the sign-up sheet.



12/17 Justin Johnson 12/2 Regina Stock 12/3 Tom Butch Nannette Martin 12/5 Kole Desotelle 12/20 Judy Tochterman 12/6 Bill Buchmiller 12/21 Tina Casey 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

Game Nights have now been changed to the third <u>Friday</u> of the month at 5:00. The next Game Night will be December 19.

Rollover Your IRA

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even reach a higher tax bracket. Rolling over part of your IRA's "required minimum distribution" or "RMD" to a charity like ours can help reduce your tax bill while supporting your favorite ministry.

If you are older than 70 & 1/2, you can roll over part of your IRA's "required minimum distribution" (RMD) \$108,000 to a charity like Memorial UMC and reduce your tax bill.

God's Country Community Ministry

Memorial Church members did such a great job packing Thanksgiving boxes in Newberry that we've been invited back to pack Christmas boxes. We will be carpooling from Memorial at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 16.

Staying in contact ...

We received an informative letter from our former Pastor Caroline and her husband Jim Hart. It is on the bulletin board.

If you would like to write to Dave and Berta Johnson, they are at 6441 Mahonia St., Kalamazoo, MI 49048, until mid-summer.

Prayer List

Periodically, we wipe the prayer list clean and start all over. If you want to see a name continue on the long-term list into 2026, please resubmit that name by Dec. 31, noting that it is for the long-term list.

Mindy A. Lisa Richer Barta Leah Belanger Lorna Benson

Kim Bessonen
Tim Bishop
Claire Burton

Beth and Sarah Benson
Diane Bishop's cousin Davy
Tom and Alice Butch

Nancy Campbell Diane Carlson
Pat Clark Kristin Cutcher
Rich Demeuse Bette DeRoeck
Gavin Ian Goldi
Shannon Hagen Baby Hannah
Jeff Hanson Nancy Harger

Hueneman family Tracy Jensen and her family

Jim Hubbard

Gail Johnivan

Tom Lack
Christopher Lund
David McCarley
Betty Nyquist

Dorell Kirschner
Mike Lagina
Toni Marchese
Jeanette Mineau
Bernice Paulson

Josiah Pryor Rodney Potvin and family

Kris R. Jordan R.
Debbie Rosen Brynlee Scott
Kay Shapy Mike Standerfer

Steven Thivierge Tim

Lettie Houghton

Tom Vogl Eileen Whitenmore

Leona Williams Family of Jim Tochterman

Christmas Cards for Sale

The table with handmade cards has been replenished with Christmas cards and other handmade cards. Cards are \$2 each.

Life Line Screening will be at Memorial on Thursday, December 11, and is offering a special screening package for members. Learn more and schedule your appointment by:

* calling 1-800-324-9458,

Christmas Concerts that some of Memorial's members are participating in:

- Bay de Noc Choral Society at Bethany Lutheran Church at 1:30 on Dec. 7
- Christmas Cantata at First Lutheran Church 3:00 on Dec. 14

^{*} texting the word circle to 216-279-1607, or

^{*}visit Life Line's website at LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC. Life Line Screening provides health screenings to detect the risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease.

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 9:00 Knit/Crochet	4	5	6
	5:30 Bible Study The Journey		6:00 Band 6:30 Bells 7:00 Choir			
7 10:30 Worship 12:00 Bible Study A Child Is Born	8	9	10 9:00 Knit/Crochet	11 Lifeline Screening	12	13
	5:30 Bible study The Journey		6:00 Band 6:30 Bells 7:00 Choir			
14 Deadline for Christ Tree 10:30 Worship 12:00 Bible Study A Child Is Born	15	16 7:30AM Carpool from church to	17 9:00 Knit/Crochet	18	19	20
	5:30 Bible study The Journey	travel to God's Country Com- munity Ministry to pack Christ- mas boxes	6:00 Band 6:30 Bells 7:00 Choir	4:30 Church Council	5:00 Game Night	
21 Noisy Offering	22	23	24	25	26 Newsletter	27
0:30 Worship 2:00 Bible Study A Child Is Born :30 Worship at Lakeview	5:30 Bible study The Journey		Christmas Eve Worship 9 p.m.		deadline	
28 0:30 Festival of lessons & Carols	29	30	31			