



We Seek to Better Understand
the Teachings of Jesus—
and Live those Teachings.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

www.fbfirst.org

P. O. Box 116, Fort Branch, IN 47648

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Blythe Chapel
8141 S. 450 W.
Owensville, IN

Fort Branch First
100 W. Vine St.
Fort Branch, IN

Office Hours

Tuesday - Thursday, 9:00 am–2:00 pm
Closed Monday and Friday

Rev. John Baylor, Jr., Pastor
john@fbfirst.org
Parsonage: (812) 615-0053



Melissa Foster,
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Rexanne Robicheaux
Musician @ First & Blythe

Derek Robicheaux
Custodian @ First

Zella Frey
Custodian @ Blythe

WELCOME

Whoever you are,
and wherever you find yourself
on the journey of faith, you are
welcome to this church as you
are to receive the riches of
God's grace...

The Way...

The earliest Christians were called *The People of the Way*.

This weekly publication is provided to show
how our congregations are living *The Way* today.

First Sunday of Advent December 3, 2023

Women's Conference
**WE LOVE
BECAUSE
HE FIRST
LOVED US.**
1 JOHN 4:19
Fort Branch First UMC
100 W Vine ST, Fort Branch, IN 47648

February 24 9am-2pm
Guest Speaker
Jammy Whitehurst
\$25
conference, lunch & t-shirt
RSVP to Kristi Pflug 812/664-1108
by February 17, 2024
Please indicate t-shirt size.

Advent meanings

During Advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles that each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.



Christmas Candy, Cookies & Goodie Trays

December 10th

Pre-order or day of sales.
Small \$15 Large \$30
We will have some items for sale
individually also.

Back School Bash

A season of relationship

For his Christmas album *Milk & Cookies*, worship leader David Crowder wanted to focus on the relationship aspect of the holidays and the mixed emotions involved. Deaths of loved ones, absence from home or having "no home to get back to," he says, can wrap sadness into what's supposed to be a joyful season.

Yet pain and separation perfectly mirror the meaning of Christmas, according to Crowder. "It's about the created being at a distance from their Maker and ... God making a way back into communion with [them]." He adds, "I feel like most of the stuff that we experience around the season points to what is the miraculous — that there was the best gift ever given, and it was to make a way back into relationship with our Creator."

Advent

N T W N E N X V S A M T S I R H C D X O C G G A
S G F R M R D M U H W F H I U G Y G E P G H Z C
E U E Q M E Z E V H N P E M G S Q G G E Y F D T
I Q H V A K V H L P O W T M Z Z H P M E B F Y L
R H L T N O G E X E Z I N A S J C E Q T C J P V
E V X V U B Q L I S R S A C O Z Y O P V F S Y O
T X D J E O R H G O K E T U A D J X K A S J J O
S Q B S L O O T K J U M I L Y T V C F W R V O C
Y V X G Z W V E K T F E V A G H G B A N O D T A
M R Y K G L W B N R N N I T O U H D I S H P S M
L Z O V I T F V B Y Z S T E E L D P T E R P J R
U D J I R S R H P A R D Y C L L V A H G S E S Y
F E S O E Q Y C L E L J J O I A B S B W K A U M
Y F G L D L V J E Z Q F Q N R A E A M L C C H W
O E V E Q S Y R A M R W G C M N O P T E L E F U
J P V T V Z T H I U D C X E R G V V O S R Y S B
Q O L I E E R W T A L Z L P I E E K E Q F G H M
U H S Q S F O A P O H I X T V L S U H K V L M W
R L Z S S T A R T Y S J V I B S O F S J I W Z B
J G E P M T N H E O L L L O P S R F X V I L T S
C J Z X G C E P Z H O P T N D U U Z W M U Z Y U
A D Z S U S E J P H D Y Z Q K O V R P N I B M T
T G A U D E T E S U N D A Y E S Y Z O X Q J I I
V X U G S N U K G X H T A E R W T N E V D A R B

ADVENT WREATH
CHRISTMAS
GAUDETE SUNDAY
JESSE TREE
JOY
NATIVITY
SHEPARDS
SWADDLING CLOTHES

ANGELS
EMMANUEL
HOPE
JESUS
JOYFUL MYSTERIES
PEACE
STABLE
VIOLET

BETHLEHEM
FAITH
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
JOSEPH
MARY
ROSE
STAR
WISE MEN



Ellie Beckett ~ 4th
Bill Frey ~ 7th
Rick Wilson ~ 8th
Susan Ahlfeld ~ 9th
John & Karen Windell ~ 9th



Methodist Women's Group
Next meeting on
Saturday, December 9th @ 9am
All women of the church are invited.

Fort Branch First UMC
P. O. Box 116
Fort Branch, IN 47648

Deliver to:

* -This symbol,
when found in the Order of Service
invites you to stand - if able.

CCLI #2446518
Streaming License # 20701562

THIS WEEK *At Church*

† Indicates location is Blythe Chapel
Ω Indicates location is First UMC

This Sunday: 1st Advent Sunday

9:00am † Worship

10:30am Ω Worship & Live
streaming worship

Monday: ~ Office Closed ~

6:30pm Ω Bible Study

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday: ~ Office Closed ~

Saturday:

9:00am Ω Methodist Women

12:00pm Ω Private Rental
Rostron

Next Sunday: 2nd Advent Sunday

9:00am † Worship

10:30am Ω Worship & Live
streaming worship

Complete Schedule @
www.fbfirst.org



Rev. John Baylor, Jr.

PRELUDE

***THE LIGHT OF GOD IS PRESENT WITH US**

***HYMN # 196** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

*GREETING AND PRAYER

*We offer a cordial greeting to all worshipers who have come to praise the Lord.
Your presence helps lift our spirits, and we welcome you in Christ's name.*

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING ~ HOPE

10:30am ~ Bill & Susan Ahlfeld

Congregation: *We wait as people surprised again
and again by God who shakes us out of our
complacency and wakes us up to the work of the
kin-dom all around us.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Please add your name to the attendance register located in your pew and pass to
the next person until reaches everyone in your row.*

PRAYERS

SHARING OF CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

PRAYER HYMN # 211 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.

THE OFFERING:

The Gathering of the Gifts

*Presentation of Gifts with **DOXOLOGY**:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Him all creatures here below!
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts!
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.

CHILDRENS MOMENT

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Derek Robicheaux ~ Mary, Did You Know?
Jenna Schleter ~ Mary, Did You Know?

***SCRIPTURE LESSON** *Isaiah 9:1-9; Luke 3:1-20 NLT*

MESSAGE *"First Sunday of Advent: The Gift of Hope"*

***HYMN # 236** *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

***BLESSING** Pastor

***THE LIGHT OF GOD LEADS US INTO THE WORLD**
Acolytes

*DEPARTING SONG:

Hymn #219 *What Child Is This*
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

*PASSING THE PEACE:

Let us greet one another with the peace of God.

POSTLUDE



**Friends
needing
prayers**

*Prayer Requests —last names are printed
for individuals requesting prayer for themselves or
with explicitly given permission.*

*Jane Marginet, Richard
Michel, Becca Manolov, Carla
Jackson, Morgan Whitehead,
Terri Jarboe, Derek Barton,
Jo Eckert, Ruby Wilkerson,
Scotti Pitts, Gretchen Young,
June Regenhold, Brian Price,
Triston, Tegan, Pastor John,
Thelma & Len Robicheaux,
Wyatt Wagner, TJ Lewis,
Mary & Roy, Roberta &
Duncan, Koda, Brenda &
Robin Hooker, Nathan Hargiss,
Mark Fear, Kim Stratton*



Pastor John & Staff Christmas Gifts

will be presented during
Christmas Eve Worship.

Anyone wishing to
participate should mail
their contribution either
to the church office or

Don Steinmetz
253 E 750 S
Fort Branch,
47648.

You may also give them
to Don in person or place
in the offering plate by

December 17th.

Hope in the Messiah

⁹ Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.

²¹ The people who walk in darkness
will see a great light.

For those who live in a land of deep darkness,
a light will shine.

³ You will enlarge the nation of Israel,
and its people will rejoice.

They will rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest
and like warriors dividing the plunder.

⁴ For you will break the yoke of their slavery
and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders.

You will break the oppressor's rod,
just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.

⁵ The boots of the warrior
and the uniforms bloodstained by war
will all be burned.

They will be fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child is born to us,
a son is given to us.

The government will rest on his shoulders.

And he will be called:

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His government and its peace
will never end.

He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David
for all eternity.

The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies
will make this happen!

The LORD's Anger against Israel

⁸ The Lord has spoken out against Jacob;
his judgment has fallen upon Israel.

⁹ And the people of Israel and Samaria,
who spoke with such pride and arrogance,
will soon know it.

Luke 3:1-20 NLT

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

³ It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. ² Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness. ³ Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. ⁴ Isaiah had spoken of John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!

Clear the road for him!

⁵ The valleys will be filled,
and the mountains and hills made level.

The curves will be straightened,
and the rough places made smooth.

⁶ And then all people will see
the salvation sent from God.”

⁷ When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said, “You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? ⁸ Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ⁹ Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ The crowds asked, “What should we do?”

¹¹ John replied, “If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry.”

¹² Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, “Teacher, what should we do?”

¹³ He replied, “Collect no more taxes than the government requires.”

¹⁴ “What should we do?” asked some soldiers.

John replied, “Don’t extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay.”

¹⁵ Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered their questions by saying, “I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.” ¹⁸ John used many such warnings as he announced the Good News to the people.

¹⁹ John also publicly criticized Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, for marrying Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for many other wrongs he had done. ²⁰ So Herod put John in prison, adding this sin to his many others.

RESPONSE: The Word of God, for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Listening Guide
“The Gift of Hope”
December 3, 2023

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-9; Luke 3:1-20

What hope does Christmas bring?

A New _____

The Voice of _____

A Shift in _____

Personal Application: Everybody is looking for hope. This has happened throughout the generations. Where does your hope come from?



Christmas Flower Dedications

In Memory of Tom R. Lewis
~His Family

In Memory of Elizabeth Shanks
~ Tom Lewis Family

In Memory of Marvin & Dorothy Steinmetz
~ The Steinmetz Family

In Memory of Allen & Margie Cornelison
~ The Steinmetz Family

In Memory of Cameron Foster
~ Kelly & Melissa, Brandon, Lauren, Owen, Caleb & Chase

In Memory of Larry Nurrenbern & Phil Minton
~ Jeff & Laura Nurrenbern

In Memory of Our Loved Ones Who've Passed On
~ Bruce & Marilee Rostron

In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Buck
~ Paul & Jeanie Cardinal

In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Cardinal
~ Paul & Jeanie Cardinal