

CONNECTIONS

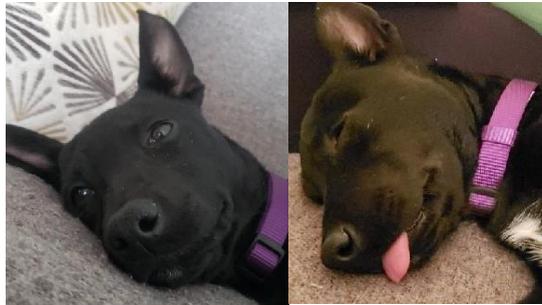
Our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world



Message from the Pastor



As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
 (John 15:9 NIV)



UPCOMING
EVENTS

3/5/21
 World Day of
 Prayer

3/28/21
 Palm Sunday

3/28-4/3
 Holy Week

Meet Daisy. She is the newest member of the Loring family. After months of processing our grief over losing our beloved dog, Jazzy, and waiting for the right time to choose another dog, we saw this adorable face on the Michigan Humane Society website and well, I/we could not resist.

It's only been a short time since she's found her forever home with us, but I have pondered about her more than once in my prayer journal. My prayer journal is the place I write out everything directly and informally to God. Not always every day. It's like a diary, in a way. When I review it, it helps me see how God is working as I realize unanswered prayers and growth within myself. It also helps me to find theological insights in the moment. Here's a recent entry I want to share with you about Daisy. Well not really Daisy, but the metaphor Daisy helped me ponder.

For I know that nothing can keep us from the love of God.
 (Romans 8:38 NLV)

2-7-2021

We got a puppy! But you know that and even as we decided between two, it was this little lady that reminded me of your love that won our hearts. Exuberant and unconditional. She is what this family has needed. She will companion us as we train her in the way to go.

With Christ as our center, we are His extended family, compassionately sharing Jesus' love with all people.
 Our congregation is on a lifelong journey of discipleship to become more like Christ.

Prayers and Praise



PRAYER requests

In the Hospital

Please remember those in Continuing Care Facilities

Luanne Genga
Novi Lakes Health Campus

Bobbie Winters
Superior Woods

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Stephanie Boltrick
Daughter of Nancy Boltrick

Christopher Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Michael Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Blake
Grandson of Betty Hughey

Jared Stabnau
Grandson of Elaine Stabnau

Cody Ford-Aimone
Grandson of Mike & Lynda Aimone

Justin Renton
Grandson of Donna Sweeney

Chad Koenne
Grandson of Dick & Lila Timm

MARCH Birthdays

Lisa	Thetford	1	Steven	Altobello	21
Kelley	Anderson	3	Craig	Lechlitner	21
Betty	Hughey	3	Vincent	Richardson	21
Marlayna	Keelan	4	Karen	Carlson	23
Marj	Priest	4	Scott	Shephard	23
Rachel	Murray	6	Donna	Sienko	24
Joann	Hoover-Begley	9	Joy	Dubin	25
Diane	Dzierbicki	10	Dawn	Yargeau	25
Mike	McCrary	10	Eunice	Kause	28
Yetta	Reges	10	Leonard	Armstrong	29
Micky	Keelan	12	Ed	Paris	29
Rhonda	Cerone	13	Cheryl	Wagner	29
Sharon	Richardson	16	Cindy	Hayes	30
Laura	Kirchoff	17	Eula	Nurnberger	30
Sue	Altobello	18	Michael	Boelter	31
Scott	Zechiel	18			

MARCH Anniversaries

Bob & Joannie	Payne	5
Brian & Cathy	Andrews	10
Bob & Carol	Schank	17
Bryan & Anne	Girbach	25

Message from the Pastor

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Interesting, isn't it? How getting a puppy can remind us of our relationship with you. How exhausted you must get keeping an eye on us every second, gently moving us out of danger and keeping us safe, firmly but gently telling us, "No!" while also guiding us on the pathway toward you.

May I have the responsive obedience to your love for me like Daisy has for us. May I chew on the right material and not what will be harmful as I try to get your attention in all the wrong ways.

After just a few days with Daisy, I can imagine how life with humanity for you must be a mingling of such joys and frustrations. You must be rooting for us to make the choice that leads back to you, yet not forcing us to make that decision. How patient you are with us. How much you love us.

May I be like our new puppy and recognize that I am loved unconditionally and wholeheartedly. May I respond promptly to your love and grace knowing that when I do, I will find it leads me to my forever home in your loving arms.

God is love. If you live in love, you live by the help of God and God lives in you.

(1 John 4:16 NLV)



**Sarah and her long-awaited best friend! Gives a whole new meaning to,
"Put Your Head on my Shoulder!"**

Yes, the Loring household has a new exuberant and unconditional love growing in it this Lenten season, and it's not just our new puppy. I'm wondering if your household may also be experiencing a new exuberant and unconditional love in God as you take time with God finding your forever home.

Lenten Blessings,
Pastor Mary





MARCH 7, 2021—THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Scripture: John 19: 25-27

Sermon Title: *Behold your son...behold your mother*

Synopsis: Answering the question: How do these words speak to us today, and how have they and do they still shape our Christian life?

Eyewitness: Mary the Wife of Clopas

MARCH 14, 2021—FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Scripture: Psalm 22, Mark 15:29-36a

Sermon Title: *My God, My God Why Have You Forsaken Me*

Synopsis: What deeper faith helped to sustain Jesus? How do we claim that deeper faith for our times of crucifixion? What can we learn from this desperate cry from the cross?

Eyewitness: A Man in the Crowd

MARCH 21, 2021—FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Scripture: John 19:28-29

Sermon Title: *I Thirst*

Synopsis: This statement seems out of place. It is only recorded in the book of John, and with John there are not insignificant statements. What is the significance of these two words and how do they speak to us?

Eyewitness: Nicodemus



MARCH 28, 2021—SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Scripture: Psalm 31:1-5, John 19:30a and Luke 23:43-47

Sermon Title: *It is Finished...Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit...*

Synopsis: In Jesus' death, these statements reveal his full trust in God. How can we learn from Jesus to place our full trust in God even in the valley of the shadow of death?

Eyewitness: The Centurion at the Cross

APRIL 1, 2021—Maundy Thursday???

APRIL 2, 2021—Good Friday???

APRIL 4, 2021—EASTER

I will be offering a first-person narrative sermon called the *Witness' Account*.





Greetings Church,

Welcome to the Lenten season where we will now officially journey through together. I hope that you have signed up for a Growth Group experience, which started the week of February 21st and runs through the week before Easter (April 4th). This small group experience will pretty much give us every step of the Spiritual Pathway including engaging in scripture, prayer, and service. If you haven't yet joined a group, please do take the time to contact me or Darlene in the church office at 734/697-9288 so we can get you connected. For a refresher as to when each group will meet and who will be leading it, please see the BellevilleFirstUMC.org website ([Growth Groups | Belleville First UMC](#)) where you can also sign up electronically.

Through Lent, Pastor Mary will preach a sermon series on the content the Growth Groups will be using, *Final Words* by Adam Hamilton. Get together with your church **family** to ensure you are **Christ centered, sharing the love of Jesus**, and navigating this **lifelong journey of discipleship** as you first *encounter God in worship*.

Don't forget about the opportunity to *grow in trust as you engage God in scripture and prayer* by exploring a daily devotional. There is a Belleville First UMC authored Lenten devotional available, as well as Upper Room publications just outside the church office for a donation of \$1. Journaling your thoughts and prayers is another opportunity to grow deeper in your relationship with God. **If you don't have a journal but would like one, let me know!!!**

Additionally, there is a new offering available free to you, through BFUMC's subscription with Cokesbury. It is a streaming service called Amplify, purchased by churches, where all Cokesbury's digital content is available for watching. You do need to create a free account by following these steps...

Please go to the following website:

<https://my.amplifymedia.com/bellevillefirstumcbelleville/welcome>

and use the special BFUMC specific Congregation Access Code which you can get by



contacting me. You will also need to enter your e-mail address. Setting up this account costs you nothing; it's just a way for you to access all the streamed content through the Amplify network (similar to a Netflix, Hulu, Xfinity/Comcast, Disney+, or Amazon Prime streaming platform if you are familiar). Have fun seeing what is available to you and let me know if there is any content you would like to see us offer as a Growth Group experience.

The upcoming summer semester will be a time when each Growth Group will offer something different for content. One of them will specifically focus on *expressing our faith through generosity* and another on *expressing faith through influence*. There will be a few more offered as well. By the time we are on a church wide study this coming fall, we will have had the opportunity in church to walk through each and every step of the BFUMC Spiritual Pathway. If you want to know more about what BFUMC's spiritual pathway involves, please don't hesitate to let me know. If you'd like to see more for yourself, you may find it posted through a slide on the homepage of the website ([Home | Belleville First UMC](#)).

Lastly, if you are looking for a new way to serve at Belleville First, there are many ways right now!!! Volunteer to pick up treat or craft supplies for the children's Easter Resurrection Party the week following Easter Sunday, April 11th. Help clean the fellowship hall area after service on Sundays where the children who choose to meet in person for their Growth Group Sunday School experience will be hanging out. Take a shift in the evening at church the week of March 14th be to pass out palms to children's families for recording their video for Palm Sunday service. Come up with a children's message for a Sunday service, including props and a story to go along with the scripture for the week. Come up with a fun video recording idea for talking about why you are inspired to give generously to BFUMC. (Please note all recordings must be submitted by no later than the Monday before the Sunday service they would be included in.) Consider contacting the Food Closet to see if there is help needed. It's easy to serve at BFUMC!!! Just contact me or the church office!!!

I look forward in earnest and hope, as we walk together to Easter people early next month and onward as the people of faith of Belleville First, living out our mission to **make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world**. I thank you as always, for your faithful presence, prayers, witness, gifts, and service, especially during times such as these. Take good care, and God bless!!!

Jill

Jill B. Sestok
Belleville First UMC
Director, Spiritual Formation
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E-Mail: JBSestok@GMail.com

Food Closet



The Emergency Food Closet is entirely dependent upon donations from the community: individuals, churches, and local businesses. In 2020, the Emergency Food Closet was blessed with food and monetary donations from local churches, businesses, and community residents.

We served 162 families with 96 of these new clients. 49% were aged 60+. This January, an additional 11 new clients were helped, and 105 bags of food were distributed. Each bag costs \$25-\$35 to fill which includes client selected refrigerated items.

Meijer has selected our food closet to partner with during their winter Simply Give Campaign at the Belleville Meijer store located at 9701 Belleville Rd. and runs from February 14 through April 10. This is the Emergency Food Closet's biggest fundraiser and helps provide food for our shelves. The campaign has two Double Match Days –

March 13th and April 3rd. Circle these dates on your calendar! If you would like to purchase a Simply Give card, please purchase on Double Match Days. On these two days, Meijer will double what one donates on the card. If one buys a \$10 card, Meijer will donate \$20, for a total donation of \$30.

If we can raise \$5,000 total on these two Double Match Days, Meijer will match up to \$10,000. The cards are available at the end of each cashier check-out lanes. Cards are also available at the church but will need to be scanned at the store to be activated.

They are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. when the food closet is open. A single card can be used to purchase any given amount as long as the total is in a denomination of \$10. The largest quantity that can be entered at one time is \$500 (quantity of 50 x \$10 Simply Give card). If a higher total amount is needed, the cashier would then simply need to scan the card again and enter an additional quantity up to maximum again of 50. Place your card and receipt in an envelope with your name and address, and turn it in to the church office to receive credit for your donation on your monthly statement.

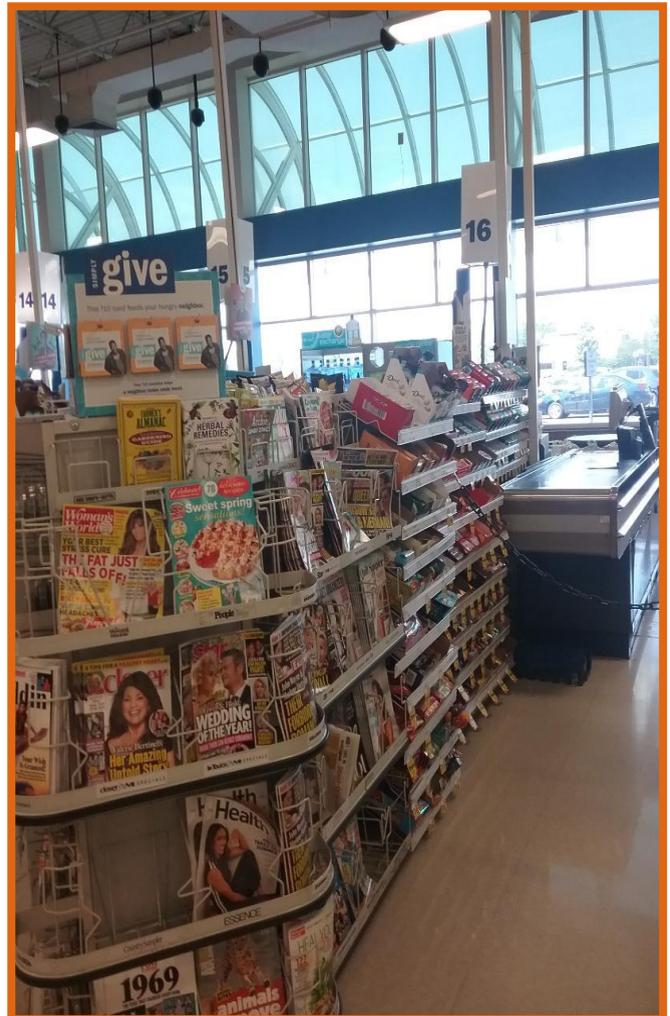
Thank you for helping the Emergency Food Closet feed the hungry in our community!

Marilyn Wood,

Emergency Food Closet Coordinator



Food Closet



The **meijer** Simply Give Campaign

Runs
February 14th
through April 10th



The Belleville Meijer store is partnering with the Emergency Food Closet housed at the First United Methodist Church to provide food for area families. You can be part of this effort by purchasing food cards at the store check outs. For each \$10 you donate, Meijer will issue a \$10 food card to the food closet. **Double Match Days** – On March 13th and April 3rd, Meijer will **double match** your donation. A \$10 purchase on those days results in \$30 of food cards for the Emergency Food Closet



Please help
feed the hungry
in
Van Buren and
Sumpter Townships
and
the City of Belleville



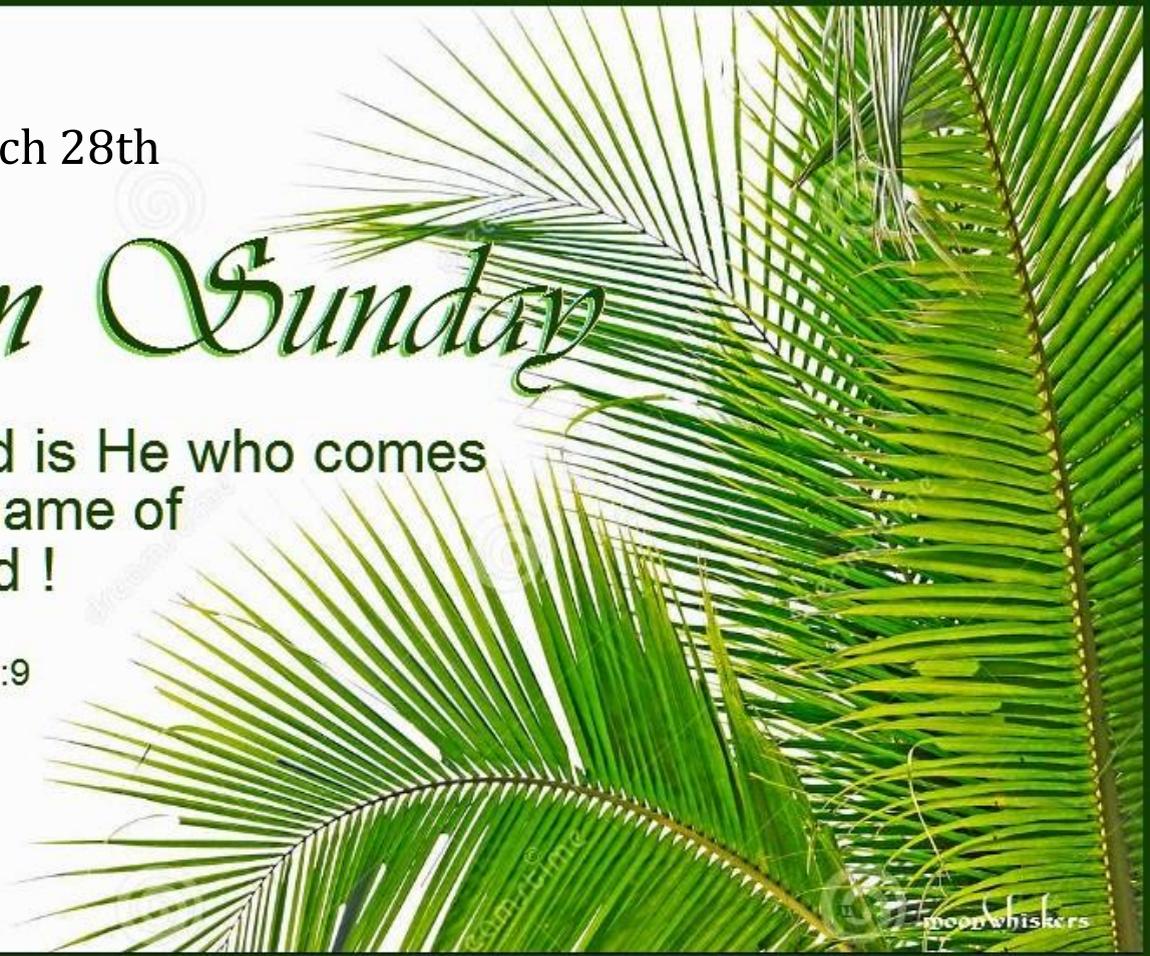


Sunday, March 28th

Palm Sunday

Blessed is He who comes
in the name of
the Lord !

Matthew 21:9

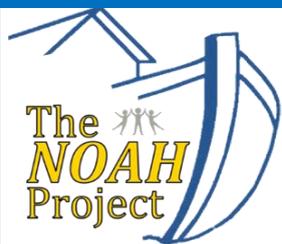


Dear BFUMC Family,

Thank you for thinking of my family and I during this difficult time. Your cards, gifts, caring words, and especially prayers were sincerely appreciated. Please continue to keep my family and me in your prayers!

Darlene Crawford

Church Secretary



Networking,
Organizing, and
Advocating for the
Homeless

N.O.A.H. Sandwiches – Thank You

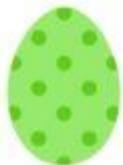
A huge thank you to everyone who baked cookies, helped make sandwiches, and assemble the lunch bags for the NOAH Project in Detroit. Volunteers included: Kelley Anderson, Marilyn Wood, Amy Reeves, Chase Reeves, Ian Simmons, Autumn Reeves, Lori Summer, Marycarol Smallwood, Julie & Mike Skelton, Debie Gurkin, Dee & Mark Groeneweg, Pat & Doug Cook, Jerry Caldwell, Alice Payne, Maxine Henderson, and Donna Collins. Mark and Dee were able to hand out the sandwiches and lunches in N.O.A.H.'s pandemic modified brown bag lunch area within Central UMC in Detroit. Belleville First supplied enough food for 300 sandwiches and lunches for those in need in Detroit. In addition, Missions was able to procure over two hundred hand warmers for distribution to those stuck out in the cold without a home. This was a great demonstration of showing Jesus' love to those in need in Detroit. Check out N.O.A.H.'s website at <https://noahprojectdetroit.org/> for more info on N.O.A.H.



- We will be making sandwiches/lunches again on March 9th so watch for the sign-up announcement!



Easter Word Search



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

BUNNY
 DUCKLINGS
 BONNET
 BASKET
 CHICKS



DAFFODILS
 EASTEREgg
 HYACINTH
 SPRING
 EGGS



LAMBS
 IRIS
 JELLYBEANS
 RABBIT
 CHOCOLATE

