

The Spark



Welcome, Winter!

Welcome to 2025! Winter is on full display here in the beauty of the Les Cheneaux area. The cold and snow can be seen as either a bleakness, an absence of comfort; or it can be viewed as a time that is part of God's perfect plan through which we are renewed and restored in the months to come.

We often evaluate our situation based on the externals. We become cold and so we seek to get warm. We become bored and so we seek things to do. We become discouraged and so we seek things that lift us up and bring us new hope. As we do these things, the danger is that we will look for our answers in the wrong places. All of us have done this at one point or another, and most of the mistakes in our lives were because we were looking for our answers in the wrong places.

In this time of snow and cold and short days, I ask us to focus on the fact that the sun is still shining, because the Son is still on His throne, the Holy Spirit is

still at work in our lives, and the Father is and always will be sovereign over all things. Even though spring is still a couple of months away, we can enjoy all four seasons, because this is God's creation, and we are the stewards of his creation.

As always, trust in Him for all things and give thanks for each new day; if for no other reason, because He is God and we are made in His image.

God bless you, and may God bless the families of First Union Church.



Pastor Jim Huber

February
2025

First
Union
Church

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A Matter of Prayer

“An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian, he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God – that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the one to which he is praying – the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on – the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is kneeling to say his prayers.”

-Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis, 1952

Different groups in our church, such as **Men’s prayer group, Women’s prayer groups, Caregivers, Sunday school, church itself, certainly Pastor Jim Huber** meet weekly to pray and pray hard for all people and their problems, be it home, health, jobs etc....When we get to do a PTL prayer, it makes us all happy.

Please continue to pray for our country and what will come next as President Trump takes office. Also pray for our schools, administration, all our teachers, and office help.

Pray for Cedar Cove, that our local folks can move in as needed, and for Dustin Tassier, the administrator, who works hard to keep the facility running smoothly.

Pray for other Christian camps who serve the area and beyond, that they will do their jobs well.

Please pray for those who don’t hear well (like Norm Perkins, Claudia Brood, Emilie Bigelow, and others) or who don’t see well. Many of us have vision problems. Maybe we can’t drive anymore. It’s hard when you live so far from

everything and have to ask for rides to appointments and events.

Pray for **Pastor Jamey Nichols**, who has had surgery and now faces, “*What’s next?*”

Luckily, when **Jim Berryhill** had a sick spell recently, he happened to be at the St Ignace Hospital and received immediate help.

Del & Eunice Newville’s nephew, Ernie, passed away recently in Grand Rapids. He had accepted Jesus before he died. He was only in his thirties, so young.

June Davis’s brother died recently in CO. We are so sorry for your loss, **Davis Family**.

Please pray for **Bill & Pat Anshutz’s** daughter, **Cindy**. She is in hospice care for terminal cancer.

Good news! **Lizzie Lehman**, who we have been praying for, was able to eat solid food and has been transferred to the Petoskey Hospital.

Pray for **Rhonda McDonald**, who has brain cancer. She is **Bill & Yvonne’s** daughter.

Janette Renaud is recovering from carotid artery surgery. Please pray she will heal well.

Pray for **Gillian Bickham** who is facing health problems related to a previous diagnosis.

Pray for **Tom & Karen Moore**, who are somewhat housebound this winter. Neither can drive, but their three daughters take them out and about and look after them so well.

Please keep **Jack Hays** on your prayer list, along with **Marilyn Sweeney** and **Chuck & Marilyn Crawford**.

**“Nothing Happens
to a Child of God
by Accident.”**

Board Highlights

First Union Church Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 1.27.25 at 6:30pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. and was opened with prayer by Mike Bolcer.

Attendance – Present: Mike Bolcer, Jim Huber, Christy Cloud-O’Hare, Mike Davis, Rick Wilson, Jeremy Bigelow, Sherri Huff, George Huff, Del Jacob, Mike Jellison

Minutes of the Nov 25, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Mike Jellison moved, Mike Davis second, approved as submitted - unanimous approval

Treasurer’s Report – Rick Wilson

See attached files - 8-page handout (giving and expenditures are very positive)

Notice page 5 of the handout (“Budget Exceptions”)

Moved by Rick Wilson, Mike Jellison second - passed unanimously

Pastor’s Report – Jim Huber

Request to use fellowship hall for a baby shower (Kathy Thomas) on Sun Mar 30, 2-5pm (Approved but want a member of the church to be present, Sherri Huff agreed to do so)

Attendance continues to be amazing (110-115 in January).

Sermon series on the Ten Commandments is underway.

Jim will cover Mike and June Davis's 9 a.m. Sunday school class for the next several weeks while the Davis's are in Florida.

Deacon’s Report – see page 6 of the 8-page document

Follow-up from last meeting’s items (see Nov minutes)

Front and rear entrance doors are now closing and latching but do not seal tightly. Solution will likely require going to a commercial-grade door (\$7000+ per door)

Kitchen upgrade plans (page 7 & 8 of handout) - no timeline for completion at this time.

Insurance coverage through Church Mutual, future questions

Exit lights and emergency lights (battery back-up failures) - deacons to address

Mission committee – Jim/Marcia/Rick/Hank
Jim gave a brief update on the discussions taking place with the committee.

We are making a focused effort to highlight missions (current and future).

There is a strong belief that “missions” should be broadly defined to include local, regional, and international support

Women’s Association – Sherri Huff

“30 pieces of silver” idea as we approach Easter (Sherri/Christy)

Claudia and Sherri will be offering “Cooking with the Oldies” on February 15.

\$100 was approved to purchase needed materials

DAR Ladies’ Day on February 8 - looking for HS age girls to offer childcare during the event (9:30a-4p)

Daughters of the King is coming up this spring – date TBD

Christian Education – Christy Cloud-O’Hare (with report from Daniel & Solana)

Anchor Club is running the low 30’s each week. New activities offerings are coming.

We have 10-12 volunteers as part of the team.

Sunday School (downstairs) is running 10-12 kids, middle school is running 5-6 each week

Youth Programs – Daniel/Solana

Youth Group is running 8 kids regularly, up to 10.

Youth Retreat at Cedar Bay is Feb 21-23.

Activities coming up are for CareNet

Pregnancy, and an event at Ross Pearson’s house

Other activities in a future rafting/tubing event, and a laser tag event

The teens are currently studying the Book of Ephesians

Old Business – None

New Business - None

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm

The next scheduled board meeting is Monday, February 24 at 6:30pm

Submitted by Jim Huber, pastor

How About You? ... Mike Davis

A lesson and two myths from the Pine Tree:

Myth number one: Pine trees (except the Tamarack) do not lose their needles in the fall like other trees. In fact, during the months of August to October, a pine tree will lose one-quarter to one-third of its three-to-four-year-old needles.

Myth number two: Pine needles are not good for mulch because they are too acidic.

Fact is, dead pine needles have lost most of the acid and are actually an excellent Mulch, allowing water to pass through to the soil. However, my advice from an old firefighter is that the dead needles are quick to burn and I would not put them near a building.

Up here in the north, we love our pine trees that stay green all winter. Our precious Christmas pine tree is special, as well. But even the good old pine tree

after many years will one day fall in the woods.

Not so with our faith. Luke 21:33 says, "When the end of the age comes, all heaven and earth will pass away, yet my words will remain true forever."

This is good news for us Christians! Even the old pine trees in Hartwick Pines State Park in Michigan won't last as long as the Word of God will. Stay firm in your faith, even when someone is "needling" you. Don't "pine" away your life, live for Jesus and look forward to life everlasting.



The Recipe Box...Sue Rye



Hi Everyone, Here I am again! I was FB surfing recently and happened to see **Karen Perkins** picture of her favorite tree with her favorite bird in it, a snowy owl. Trees are one of my favorite things, too, and so are birds, actually. I feed them outside and have had inside birds all my life, once as many as 15+ at a time. I have lots of tree things in my house too. One day I was down at the **Vanderboegh's** in Hastings, and **Linda and I** were returning a pan to her neighbor down the road. I was just raving about the neighbor's beautiful maple tree, and Larry said, "If that tree ever goes down, it will take down the white pine right beside it." Two beautiful trees. Well, guess what? A freak windstorm took them both down that very night. The neighbors called the next day and said, "Tell Sue both trees are laying in the yard." I had to go see for myself! It was so sad....

Cheeseburger Cups

Kids might like putting these together...

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 2 T brown sugar
- 1T prepared mustard
- 1-1/2 t Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tube (12 oz) refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 1/2 cup cubed Velveeta cheese

In a large skillet cook beef until no longer pink. Break up into crumbles. Drain, stir in ketchup, brown sugar, mustard, and Worcestershire sauce. Remove from heat & set aside. Press a biscuit in the bottom and up the sides of a muffin cup. Spoon meat mixture and top with cheese cubes. Bake at 400-degrees 14-16 minutes or until golden brown. Can freeze.

Tip: I'm going to try these using Manwich as the filling with the cheese cubes on top. Some of you, including me, love Manwich!!

Cabbage Soup (another version)

- 1-1/2 T olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, grated
- 2 Yukon gold potatoes, diced
- 7 cups cabbage, shredded or diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 celery rib, diced
- 1-1/2 cups great northern beans
- 3 cups canned, fire-roasted tomatoes, diced
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 1-1/2 T white wine vinegar
- 3/4 t Italian seasoning
- 1/2 t sea salt
- Pinch of black pepper
- Parsley

Cook all the diced ingredients for about 8 minutes in olive oil, except the cabbage and potatoes.

Add vinegar & mix well.
Add the potatoes and cabbage,
and simmer 30 minutes



“Wisps from Willow” Greg Wagner



You can have flaws, be anxious and even be angry, but don't forget that your life is the greatest business in the world. Only you can stop it from failure. You are appreciated, admired and loved by many. Remember that being happy is not having a sky without storms, a road without accidents, a job without effort, relationships without disappointments.

“Being happy is to stop feeling a victim and become the author of your own destiny. It's going through deserts, but being able to find an oasis deep in your soul. It's to thank God every morning for the miracle of life. It's kissing your children, cuddling your parents, having poetic moments with your friends, even when they hurt us.

“To be happy is to let live the creature that lives in each of us, free, joyful and simple. It's having maturity to be able to say: "I made mistakes". Having the courage to say "I'm sorry". It's having a sensitivity to say "I need you". Is having the ability to say "I love you". May your life become a garden of opportunities for happiness... that in spring I can be a lover of joy and in winter a lover of wisdom.

"And when you make a mistake, start over. Because only then will you fall in

love with life. You will find that being happy doesn't mean having a perfect life. But she uses tears to irrigate tolerance. Use your defeats to train your patience.

"Use your mistakes with the serenity of the sculptor. Use pain to tune into pleasure. Use obstacles to open the windows of intelligence. Never give up ... Above all, never give up on the people that love you. Never give up on happiness, because life is an amazing show.

GriefShare



If you are dealing with a loss, you may like to consider participating in GriefShare. It is hosted by First Union Church and meets at Cedar Cove Assisted Living in the Community Room on **Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30 p.m.** While this 13-week program started on January 21, you may join any time during the program.

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