

# The Outlook

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Picture taken by Sally Wibalda

## MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

It was soon after I carried the banner from Parish Hall to the Sanctuary that I received this wonderful article from Bishop David Bard. Immediately I knew that I needed to not only share it with you, but I also needed to give the banner a new name. During Advent you had filled *Hope, Peace, Love and Joy* with your prayers, loving conversations during coffee every Sunday, and thoughts from Pastor Rob's Advent series, "Journeys". As I lifted that banner high above the altar, I looked at the stained-glass window as that one "special" piece of glass shone extra bright and I said out loud... **"Hope begins when you stand in the dark looking up at the light"**. This banner will now carry the name: **Windows of Hope**. It is my prayer that as you read Bishop Bard's wonderful article and look at this banner every Sunday, you will contemplate how we as a church can *Make All Things New* by being the *Windows of Hope*. May we each embrace God's

gift of love. And may we treat ourselves and others with kindness, compassion, and understanding as we embark on the new year *together*. Bishop Bard said it best: **it is a time to reaffirm that the God of Jesus Christ is a God who is at work in our lives and in the world making all things new**. Thoughtfully read Bishop Bard's words... *Juanita Joiner*

"Looking back over last year, I'll admit it was difficult and challenging in many ways. War dragged on in Ukraine. The brutal Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, involving rape, killing, and kidnapping, led to a massive Israeli response that has taken thousands of Palestinian lives and created a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Gun violence continues to exact a terrible toll in this country, and as the year ended, we witnessed a horrific act of gun violence in Prague. There is a humanitarian crisis at our southern border. In our conference, dealing with disaffiliation and declining budgets took significant time, attention, and energy.

Of course, there were also moments of beauty, kindness, tenderness, grace, and love to note from the past year. I delight in the stories of ministries going well despite the challenges of our day and time and testimonies of churches reaching out in love and service in the name of Jesus Christ.

And now we stand at the beginning of a new year. While the simple turning of a calendar page does not mean we leave all the difficulties and challenges of the past year behind, it does offer an opportunity to focus forward and **to reaffirm that the God of Jesus Christ is a God who is at work in our lives and in the world making all things new**. "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:18-19 NRSVUE). "And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new'" (Revelation 21:5a). "So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Of course, God's making things new does not simply erase the past and does not end grief, pain, sorrow, or war in the blink of an eye. We carry the past with us. The old year travels into the new one. In the well-known words of the novelist William Faulkner from *Requiem for a Nun*: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Yet we affirm that God is working to make all things new. God is always doing a new thing – in our lives and in our world. God is always at work, moving toward love and justice, beauty and kindness, peace, and reconciliation. And even when things may be outwardly familiar in many ways, God is working on renewal. I think of the words of the poet T.S. Eliot in "Little Gidding": "With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling / We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time."

As we enter this new year, let's ask how God may work among us and through us to make the world anew. Where might God be inviting us to do new things in the furtherance of justice, kindness, peace, and reconciliation? How might we be more attentive to how God is making each of us new, renewing us in love and gentleness? In what new ways may God be inviting and empowering us to share the good news of the gospel with a world in need of God's love in Jesus Christ? While we carry the past with us, we need not be imprisoned by it. The turning of a new year is a good time to focus forward."

## Mission Possible for February 2024

**Feb. 4 — Mission of the Month**  
Water For Life

**Feb. 11 — Local Mission**  
Michigan Visitors in Mission

**Feb. 18 — Helping Hand Fund**

**Feb. 25— Hunger/UMCOR**  
United Methodist Rural Development

**Monthly Pantry Donation**  
Call 211

## Mission Accomplished December 2023

**Mission of the Month**  
HAPI \$440.00

**Local Mission**  
United Way Children's Books \$355.00

**Helping Hand Fund** \$276.00

**Hunger/UMCOR**  
Heifer International \$1090.00

**Fifth Sunday**  
Missionary Support \$20.00

**Pantry**  
Christmas at the Jail \$165.00

**Reminder...**mission offerings can be given any time during the month even though we list our offerings by the week.



...giving liberates the soul of the giver.  
~Maya Angelou



"Creating safe spaces  
for growth and community  
in Christ."

## FAIRFIELD CHILDREN'S HOME — The Homes of Hope



Pastor Rob will be spending part of his sabbatical in Zimbabwe visiting Africa University and the Fairfield Children's Home. He has invited us to join him on that visit. Our donation from CUMC for the Fairfield Children's Home will make that long journey to Africa and will be presented as our gift of love. Jars are set out each Sunday for you to drop in your pocket change. These jars will be out till he leaves after Easter.

**Old Mutare Mission** is located on the edge of the glorious and towering Chiremba Mountain. The Mission was established by Bishop Joseph C. Hartzell and houses Hartzell Primary School, Hartzell High School, Old Mutare Hospital and Fairfield's Orphanage. In a vision on top of Mt. Ciremba, Bishop Hartzell heard voices from all nations coming to the mission and the vision was fulfilled almost a hundred years later with the establishment of Africa University. Africa University is the first university in Zimbabwe that has special curriculum for international students. It is located right next to the Mission.

Since 1996, Fairfield Outreach and Sponsors Association has been providing for the needs of orphaned children in the area surrounding the Old Mutare Mission in southeastern Zimbabwe. FOSA was founded from the passion of young college students and developed with the help of many devoted supporters.

In 2002, the founders of FOSA and a missionary volunteer began planning and fundraising to build what would become Fairfield Children's Homes. The missionary traveled to Old Mutare to begin the long process of organizing the building of the Homes. This missionary worked tirelessly to see that the *Homes of Hope* were built. The foundation was dug for the first, but soon after plans were made for seven more. But the needs only continued. In all, twelve homes were built. It's now been 20 years since the children moved into their "new homes".

Central, you understand the word HOPE. You understand the meaning of LOVE. You also understand giving to MISSIONS! What a perfect way to send CUMC's love and prayers of hope to these special African children. Every child deserves a family of their own. These family-inspired homes allow every child to be raised with the support of a family unit in the comfort of a home.

**Remember the banner name!**  
***The Windows of Hope!***



## Little Dresses for Africa

I spoke with Pastor Rob and he is willing to pack a few of these little dresses in the suitcase that he's packing **just** for the orphanage. I'm also going to place a link below so you can watch a video on how these dresses are made. I am interested in finding two+ people who might want to help. If that's you, please get back with me. I am willing to chair this project. Click [HERE](#) to watch the video.

~ Juanita Joiner



## Worship at Central

Available online: **LIVE**

<https://www.facebook.com/muskegoncentralumc>

And on our YouTube Channel: **LATER IN THE DAY**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUQe2i7Fzj\\_tcwwSG7Ednw/videos?view=2&flow=grid](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUQe2i7Fzj_tcwwSG7Ednw/videos?view=2&flow=grid)

# Central Cares

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Donna Cotton, Thomas Hippchen, Josie Terpstra
- 2 — Andrew Whitsell, Derek Whitsell
- 4 — Carolyn Buboltz, Nathaniel Cotton
- 6 — Joan Maxwell
- 7 — Kailey Lundholm
- 8 — Billie Joy Thomas
- 12 — Kip Smith
- 15 — Dorothy Argue
- 20 — Vallerie Clark, Lisa Hall
- 23 — Dominick Cherry
- 27 — Thomas Huizenga



## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 24 — Tom & Mary Anne Maycroft 1996
- 27 — Kevin & Cheryl Youngquist 1982

### KNITTED HATS

A HUGE thank you to Blake Duram for knitting 250 hats this year. You read that correctly! 250! He requested that these hats get delivered to as many of the area elementary schools for children who need a hat when they don't have one, forgot to wear one, and even for when they lost their hat. This past winter storm was a reminder of how hats such as these are truly needed by the children in Muskegon.

Several members have been busy dividing these hats up to deliver to several of our school districts in the Muskegon area. Thank you for spreading the love.

Blake also wants to thank those of you who donated yarn this past year. It takes a huge team of people to make this happen each and every year. It's not too early to start setting your yarn aside for Blake. You can always drop it off at the church office and we will see that Blake receives your donations.

**How many hats will he knit in 2024?**



### Special Request:

- ♥ Please keep Connie in the church office updated on any of the prayer requests you have made on behalf of your friends and family.
- ♥ **Where to send important information!**  
**Please send to all addresses.**
- ♥ Juanita Joiner for the Newsletter:  
jjoiner@muskegoncentralumc.org
- ♥ Connie Jones for the Church Calendar:  
connie@muskegoncentralumc.org

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 1 — Red Letter Christians 10 a.m. (Parlor)
- 2 — Supper House 3:45 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 4 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)  
Call To Prayer Small Group 11 a.m. (Conference Room)  
Going Deeper 5 p.m. (Parlor)
- 5 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)  
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Sanctuary)
- 6 — Staff Mtg. 11 a.m. (Conference Room)  
\*Garden Group Meeting 5 p.m. (Basement area)
- 8 — Romeo's 8:30 a.m. (Carmen's Café)  
Juliet's 9 a.m. (Cherokee Restaurant)  
Blood Drive 11 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 11 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
- 12 — Mobile Food Truck 4:30 p.m. CUMC Parking Lot  
Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 13 — \*Garden Group Meeting 5 p.m. (Basement area)
- 14 — **Ash Wednesday Service 7 p.m. (Sanctuary)**
- 15 — Red Letter Christians 10 a.m. (Parlor)
- 18 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)  
Call To Prayer Small Group 11 a.m. (Conference Room)  
Going Deeper 5 p.m. (Parlor)
- 19 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 20 — Outlook Deadline  
Book Club 9:30 a.m. (Library)  
Building Team Mtg. 11 a.m. (Conference Room)  
\*Garden Group Meeting 5 p.m. (Basement area)
- 22 — Volunteer at Kids' Food Basket (1537 S. Getty St.)  
Blood Drive 11 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 25 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
- 26 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 27 — Outlook Mailed  
\*Garden Group Meeting 5 p.m. (Basement area)
- 28 — Leadership Council Mtg. 5:30 p.m. (Conference Room)  
\*Dates for Garden Group may change during the month.

### Church Closing Information



Please check our **website** or TV stations: **WOODTV-8, WZZM-13, WXMI-Fox 17.**



**If Muskegon Public Schools are closed, the Church Office is also closed.**

### Church Office Hours

**Our regular office hours at the church.**  
**Tuesday — Thursday 9 a.m. — 2 p.m.**



# Central

## United Methodist Church

1011 2nd Street  
Muskegon MI 49440  
231-722-6545  
MuskegonCentralUMC.org



Muskegon Central United Methodist

### Central Staff

- Rev. Rob Cook, Senior Pastor  
rob@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545 Ext. 4
- Connie Jones, Office Coordinator  
connie@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545 Ext. 1
- Marian Davis, Parish Visitor  
marian@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545
- Juanita Joiner, Newsletter Editor  
jjoiner@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545 Ext. 2
- Dan Melinn, Facilities Coordinator  
dmelinn@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545
- Carl Chapman, Custodian  
office@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545
- Marie Rood, Financial Administrator  
marie@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545 Ext. 3
- Cavan Berry, Church Treasurer  
cumc@muskegoncentralumc.org
- Colin Berry, Video Technician  
colin@muskegoncentralumc.org
- Carolyn Buboltz, Financial Secretary  
cumc@muskegoncentralumc.org  
231-722-6545 Ext. 3

Have news for the Outlook? See page 3 for submission addresses. Next Outlook deadline is **February 20**. Thank you!

### LOOK WHO JUST TURNED 50!!

**Yes, Pastor Rob is officially 50!!**

*Life is a journey and along the way  
We meet special people who brighten our days.  
You're special to us and have made our lives bright  
May this be the best day of your life.*

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PASTOR ROB**

