Hope dominates the season of Advent the way the setting sun dominates photos of cityscapes and countrysides. Even when it is not directly visible, it transforms everything that we see and experience. The prophet’s lament for the unfaithfulness of God’s people, never forgets the proclamation of the redemption to come. The Apostles Peter and Paul recognize God at work in the early church in spite of the struggles that they and the congregations shared. Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah all embrace a place in salvation history in spite of suspicion and ridicule by those closest to them. And all of this because of hope rooted in God’s faithfulness.

But hope is not always an easy thing. In one of my favorite films, *The Shawshank Redemption*, the two central characters, inmates Andy Dufresne and “Red” Redding are talking about the power of music and the danger of hope.

**Andy**: I had Mr. Mozart to keep me company...[^points and taps his head.] It was in here. [^gestures over his heart] And in here. That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you. Haven't you ever felt that way about music?

**Red**: Well... I played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost interest in it, though. Didn't make too much sense in here.

**Andy**: No, here's where it makes the most sense. You need it so you don't forget.

**Red**: Forget?

**Andy**: That there are places in the world that aren't made out of stone. That there's... there's somethin' inside that they can't get to; that they can't touch. It's yours.

**Red**: What are you talkin' about?

**Andy**: Hope.

**Red**: Hope? Let me tell you something, my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside. You'd better get used to that idea.

The hope to which we hold is not the wish-fulfillment of a child’s list indulgently fulfilled under a Christmas tree (easy for me to say since I’m not a grandparent) or nostalgia for bygone days when Christmas all seemed simpler. The hope to which we hold in Christ may indeed cost us our station in life, our personal perks, or even our sanity as Red feared. But in return we can envision a world that perfectly reflects God’s faithfulness, a world where the poor have good news preached to them, the brokenhearted are made whole, the mourning are comforted, and the ruins are rebuilt. This is a transformational hope, and a hope worth celebrating this Advent.

Pastor Carter
My Christmas Story
I have a favorite contemporary Christmas story. Because the author of this story is unknown, I am claiming it as mine to share with others.

The Man and the Birds

Now the man to whom I'm going to introduce to you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man, generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men but he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was just too honest to pretend otherwise, he just couldn't swallow the Jesus story about God coming to earth as a man. I'm truly sorry to distress you he told his wife but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas eve, he said he'd feel like a hypocrite, that he would much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them, and so he stayed, and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall, he went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then he went back to his fireside chair and he began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound, then another and then another sort of a thump or a thud, at first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window but when he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow, they'd been caught in a storm and in a desperate search for shelter they had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze so remembering the barn, where the children stabled their ponies that would provide a warm shelter if he could direct the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat, goulashes, and trance through the deepening snow to the barn and he opened the doors wide turned on a light but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in, so he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled
them on the snow making a trail to the yellow lighted wide open doorway to the stable, but to his dismay the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them, he tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them and waving his arms, instead they scattered in every direction except in the warm lighted barn and then he realized that they were afraid of him. So, then he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature, if only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me, that I'm not trying to hurt them but help them but now because any move he made tended to frighten them and confuse them, they just would not follow-- they would not be led or shooed because they feared him, if only I could be a bird he thought to himself and mingle with them and speak their language, then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to the safe warm -----to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see and hear and understand. At that moment the church bells began to ring, the sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind and he stood there listening to the bells and Adeste Fideles [O Come, All Ye Faithful], listening to the bells reeling the glad tidings of Christmas and he sank to his knees in the snow…

In one of our Praise and Worship choruses we sing these words.

"He came from heaven to earth to show the way-- From the earth to the cross our debt to pay-- ."

Like the birds floundering helplessly in the snow we were floundering helplessly in sin and He came to save us. God came into this world so that we could know Him, so that he could care for us, so that we could understand him and trust him.

Anita and I wish you all a Merry and Blessed Christmas!

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. Philip. 1:4

Red Miller
Dear church family,

Please join us on Sunday Dec. 21st during our 10:00 a.m. worship service as the children put on their annual children’s program of singing and readings by our children.

Vivian Speakman

“Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!” — Hunter S. Thompson

Hanging of the Greens

November 30 after coffee hour. Children will be making Christmas cookies. Adults will decorate Fellowship Hall.

All are welcome to join in.

NOTE: Help is needed to bring the Christmas decorations up from the church basement. See Vivian Speakman for more information

Dear church family,

Please join us on Sunday Dec. 21st during our 10:00 a.m. worship service as the children put on their annual children’s program of singing and readings by our children.

Vivian Speakman

SPECIAL ORGAN MUSIC OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Please plan to go to First Congregational Church on Sunday, December 7, at 4 P.M. to hear an hour of Christmas music on the organ. Dr. James Wagner of the Congregations) Church, Dr. Richard Schneider of St. Mary Catholic Church and Dr. Curtis Mathison, of our First United Methodist Church of Wayne-Westland will each present 20 minutes of Christmas music. This concert will really help to put us into the true Spirit of Christmas. I am thoroughly enjoying preparing for this unusual concert. I'll be looking for you!

Dr. Curtis Mathison
Christmas Giving Opportunities

All Church Christmas Caroling

**Sunday, December 21**—after coffee hour
We will car pool and sing to shut in members of our church and spread some Christmas cheer
Sign up during coffee hour—Questions?
Call Linda Maylone-734-674-7239

All ages are encouraged to join in!

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Scarf, Hat and Mitten Tree

This tree is set up in the Narthex of the church. Pick up a hat, scarf, gloves or mittens (any size) and hang on the tree. These items will be donated to programs in the Wayne-Westland area. (Note: Shirleen Curtis knits and donates hats to the United Methodist Women’s Boutique—only $4.00 each!)
Pick up a hat and support U.M.W. missions, too! Questions?
Check in with Chris Shelly

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Participate in Operation Christmas Card

How it works:
You place one Christmas card in the collection plate, extending your Christmas wishes to all members of our congregation.
Include a monetary donation in your card that would cover the cost of postage and cards mailed to your church friends individually. Questions?
Check in with Phil Shelly

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Noah’s Ark Angel Tree

This tree is set up in the lobby of the church near the Narthex. It is decorated with animals two by two. There will be tags on the tree with the names of homebound members of our congregation. You may select a tag, purchase small gift items, and deliver to your Angel sometime during the Christmas holiday. Think of the joy this will bring to both the giver and receiver!
Questions?
See Janice Podgers or Ginger Cook
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

EXECUTIVE MEETING: Wednesday, Dec. 3,- 6:30 PM
CHRISTMAS PARTY - Angelo Brothers - 33550 Ford Road, Westland
Let Linda Maylone know if you are coming.

CHARIS CIRCLE
Monday, December 1, 7:00 PM - Parlor
- An Advent Reflection
- A Children’s Christmas Story
- Dessert will be provided
Please bring your own beverage

ESTHER-MARTHA CIRCLE
Tuesday, December 9 - 12 Noon
At the Cafe Marquette, Ford Career Technical Center
36455 Marquette, Westland

CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE
The Christ Boutique sponsored by the United Methodist Women will be open December 7 and 14 after worship service. There are lovely crafts, needlecraft, Rada cutlery, Christmas décor, Fair Trade coffee and many other items.

PRAYER BREAKFAST
February 14, 2015
New calendars come every day in the mail, make one your friend and put this date on it. We, Wayne,- Westland United Methodist Women are hostess to the meeting. Much help will be needed!

PURPOSE OF THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
The organized unit of the United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.
Christmas Boutique
Located in the Parlor

The boutique will be open on Sunday - December 7 & 14 after the worship service. You can support United Methodist Women Missions, the church and do some Christmas shopping at the Boutique. We have lovely crafts, needlework, Rada Cutlery, Fair Trade Coffee, Christmas Decor and many other items.

Why not get your coffee and then come and browse!

Thank you for your support,
United Methodist Women
December Anniversaries

13th Dave & Gloria Dillingham
27th Paul & Ginger Cook
28th Jeannine & Roy Klay

December Birthdays

1st Wendy Ross
2nd Doug Schoonover
3rd Nathan Weiser
4th Elizabeth Smith
8th Jim Nault
9th Jeannine Klay
11th Luanne Grosse
12th Jackie Allbee
14th Skylar Stevens
15th Amanda Speakman
17th Laura Buckingham
19th Linda Maylone
20th Ellen Rothfelder
25th Mary McCormick
# December 2014

## Monthly Planner

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<td>7:00pm Charis Circle</td>
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<td>7:00pm Worship Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>12:00pm Esther/Martha Christmas Party Cafe Marquette</td>
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<td>10am Worship</td>
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<td>7:00pm Quilt Club</td>
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<td>12:00pm NA Meeting 7:00pm AA meeting</td>
<td>6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Chancel Choir</td>
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<td>4:00pm Organ Concert at Congregational Church</td>
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<td>12:00pm NA meeting 9am-1pm Food Dist</td>
<td>12:00pm NA meeting 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service</td>
<td>12:00pm NA Meeting 7:00pm AA meeting CHRISTMAS DAY</td>
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<td>12:00noon Dep/Anx</td>
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**Mission Statement**

We are the Congregation of First United Methodist Church of Wayne-Westland and are a committed, loving, Christian community of Jesus Christ, in ministry, witnessing to the love of God as experienced in our lives, and expressed by: worship together, Christian nurture, education evangelism, Christian fellowship and support of one another, invitation to others to share our faith, social awareness, involvement and support of world wide Methodism. Our witness embraces all people.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 A.M.
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:00 A.M.
YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 A.M.