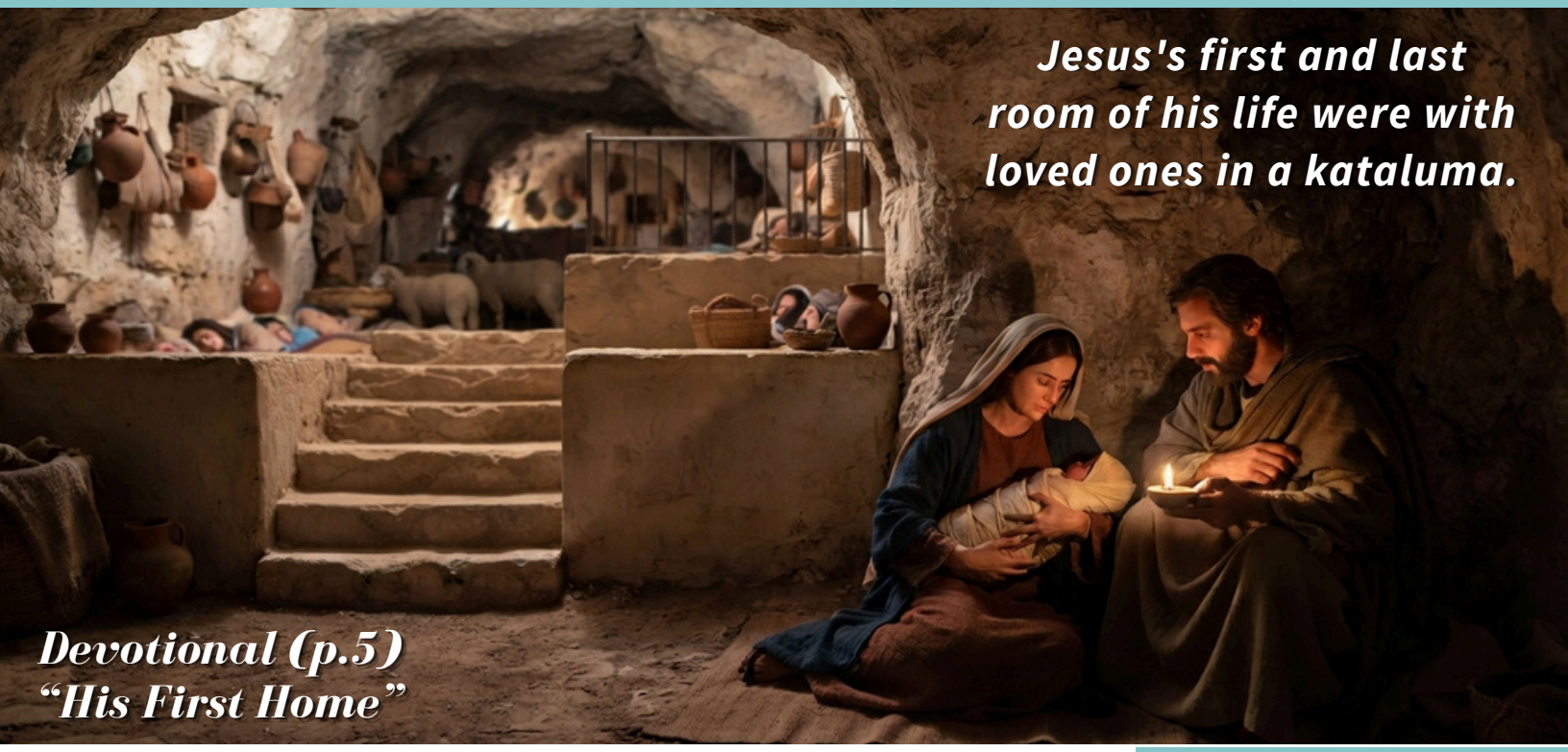
Flushing United Methodist Church December 2026/January 2027

Together In Faith

Preparing servants who make a difference in their community and the world by knowing Christ, following Christ and sharing Christ.



Devotional (p.5)
"His First Home"

Pastor's Corner

BY REV. RUTH VANDERSANDE

Advent is officially upon us, though it seems the cold weather was a little extra delayed this year. Throughout advent we focus on four of the attributes that Christ brought into the world, Hope, Joy, Peace and Love. We light the advent candles each year, ending with the Christ candle on Christmas Eve. The reason we light the Christ candle along with these attributes is that we understand that it is through Christ we find perfect hope, perfect joy, perfect peace, and perfect love. We acknowledge these stem from our God alone, gifts given to us, and then on Christmas Eve we send that light out into the congregation to represent us bringing the light of Christ, the hope, joy, peace and love of Christ, into the world

And as we know, bringing these into the world is not easy, it is fragile at times, just like those candles as we try to keep them lit. Sometimes it feels like it only takes one small gust of wind and they will go out. Or even worse, that the people around us are trying to blow that candle out. And yet, the light of Christ can never truly be extinguished. This we learn at Easter time. Because no matter how dark things get,

(Continued next page)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:45 am
Traditional Service

11:15 am
Contemporary Worship

SUNDAY SCHOOL

10 am - All Ages

YOUTH GROUP

6th - 12th Grade
3:00 - 4:30 pm

Cannot attend service in person? Join us online!
Facebook.com/FlushingUMC
or Youtube/user/flushingumc

(Continued ...
Pastor's Corner)

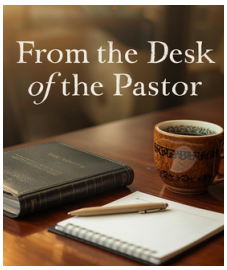
the light of Christ will shine into the darkness. This doesn't mean we won't face difficulties or hardships, or that we will live in perpetual states of hope, joy, peace and love, but rather that we can find them when we place Christ at the center of our lives. That we can learn to grow in these traits, to hope when things seem hopeless, to be joyful in sorrow, to find peace amidst conflict and to love when people oppose us.

These are the things that we cling to when we cling to Christ. It is not that we should feel ashamed when our feelings don't always match these, but rather that Christ wants to offer us the best life which comes through embracing these traits.

And so this Christmas season, I want you to find the things that bring you hope, joy, peace and love. Make a list for each and post it somewhere you will see it every day. As you get ready in the morning, read this list to get yourself ready for the day, and see how God may shift your focus during this busy time of year.We will have a lot going on at the church over the next month and beyond, so make sure that you mark your calendars for our special services, fun events, and times of fellowship. And as always, I look forward to worshiping with you during this Christmas season.

God Bless,

Rev. Ruth VanderSande



Sermon Series: *Gift Exchange*

Nov 29: *Despair for Hope* | Psalm 121: 1-8
Hymns - #196 Come, Though long-expected Jesus, #218 It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, #217 Away in a Manger

Dec 6: *Anxiety for Peace* | John 14:27
Hymns - #237 Sing We Now of Christmas, # 240 Hark! The Harold Angels Sing, #219 What Child Is This

Dec 13: *Sorrow for Joy* | Psalm 30
Hymns - #230 O Little Town of Bethlehem, #239 Silent Night, Holy Night

Dec 20: *Fear for Love* | 1 John 4:7-19
Hymns - # 211 O Come O Come Emmanuel, #238 Angels We Have Heard on High

Christmas Eve: Darkness for Light | Isaiah 9:2-7

Dec 27: *Meaninglessness for Purpose* | Jeremiah 29:11
Hymns - #245 The First Noel, #246 Joy to the World

Sermon Series: *Generations*
Jan 3: *Standing on the Promises* | Luke 2:25-38
Jan 10: *I'm Really Listening* | 1 Samuel 3:1-14
Jan 17: *Formed and Freed* | 1 Timothy 4:6-16
Jan 24: *Where You Go, I Will Go* | Ruth 1:1-18

Sermon Series: ***To the Churches Again***
Jan 31: *Colossae* | Colossians 2:6-15



December 24th

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 21 & 28 (Children's Play)

5 pm | Traditional Service
7 pm | Contemporary Worship

Tinsel Talent Tapestry

Join us for the sounds of Christmas with our own talented members

Sunday, December 6
@ 6:00 PM

It's that time of year again! Time to spread cheer, be merry and bare witness with the talents of our church family. If anyone is interested, please contact Autumn Cichowski via phone or email: superskier89@gmail.com or 810-691-6840



Christmas Memorials



Please order by:
Sunday December 20th

Remember someone special this holiday season by giving a Christmas Memorial Donation. The poinsettias soon to adorn the Centrum will serve as a reminder of the donations given in honor of or in memory of friends and family members. Names for whom gifts have been given will be listed in the December 24th Christmas Eve bulletin. A suggested donation is $20, but all donations are welcome.

Donations given will support:
North End Soup Kitchen

Donation forms are in the lobby

FAITHFUL FUNNIES

God's Not Deaf

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs:
"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..."
"I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO..."
His older brother leaned over, nudged him and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf." to which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

Kid's Christmas Jokes

- What is a skunk's favorite Christmas song?
  Jingle smells!
- Which of Santa's reindeer has bad manners?
  Rude-olph!
- What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?
  Cookie sheets.
- What is an elf's favorite kind of music?
  Wrap music!

Missions News

Adopt a Family for Family Promise & Angel Tree Gifts

Return gifts by December 13

Give the gift of love this Christmas. You to make a difference in the lives of those in need. Help families put items under the tree.

Family Promise Gifts

Christmas gift tags will be located on the Angel Tree. Tags will have a sticker on the front and the gift idea on the back. UNWRAPPED gifts, with the tag attached, are due back by Sunday, December 13th. Bins will be labeled for Family Promise.

AngleTree Gifts



Grab an angel tag on the Angel tree in the Narthex. Buy the gift listed on the tag, and place the tag back on top of the gift. Place the WRAPPED gift in the Narthex

Bueche's Receipts

We are collecting receipts that have Kids' Amount on them. This includes receipts dated after the end of September. To date we have collected receipts totaling $1,244.44. There is a basket at the Mission table in Fellowship Hall.



United Women In Faith News



Candle Walk Warming Center - Free Hot Chocolate will be served in the church lobby during the Candle Walk on Thurs., Dec 3 & Fri., Dec 4

2026 United Women in Faith Bake Sale

Join us in making buckeyes in the kitchen

Mon & Wed, Nov 30th & Dec 2 @ 10am

Also: come help package cookies

Wednesday, December 2 @ 1pm

Cookies and Buckeyes will be for sale at the Candlewalk Thurs & Fri, December 3 & 4 and at church Sun, December 6 (or until sold out!)



Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling (pitched his tent) among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

And say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room (kataluma), where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

Luke 22:11

His First Home

Devotional By Rose Dessinger

Please read: Luke 2:1-7 and Matthew 1:24–25

No room in the kataluma at His birth (Luke 2:7); a kataluma prepared for His final meal (Luke 22:11)—from cradle to cross, He chose the warmth of family.

As Christians, we have heard the story of the Nativity many times. Everywhere you go, you see pictures of Mary and Joseph isolated in a wooden barn with baby Jesus lying in a pristine cradle. It looks cute and almost cozy, even with the animals standing around. Our children perform plays about it every year.

But historically speaking, how correct is this Western version of the nativity? If the real scene of Jesus' birth were shown on TV today, it would shatter our perceptions and expose our modern myths.

No Room at the Inn

The Greek word Luke uses is kataluma, which means a guest room or an upper chamber—not a commercial motel. In fact, this is the exact same word Luke uses later for the Upper Room of the Last Supper.

Because Bethlehem was Joseph's ancestral hometown, they were staying with extended family. In first-century Judea, homes were often "cave homes" built directly up against the mouths of natural limestone hills. The kataluma was the cleaner, upper living area where the family stayed. The natural cave below served as the ground floor where tools were stored, grain was kept, and valuable animals were brought on cold nights.

It was also where the manger—a feeding trough carved into the rock floor—was located.

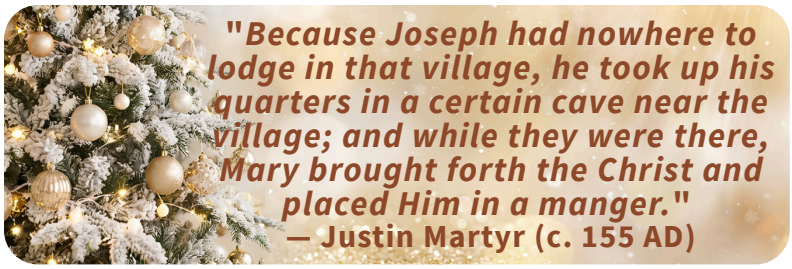
When Luke says there was no room in the kataluma, it means the upper guest quarters were already packed to capacity with other traveling relatives.

So, the family did the most hospitable thing they could: they invited Mary and Joseph down into the lower, cave-like level of the house where there was privacy, warmth, and space to give birth.

You Are Not Alone

The image of a panicked Joseph frantically delivering a baby by himself by the light of a single lantern is a modern Western invention. In the ancient Near East, childbirth was strictly a communal, female-led event. Men were completely excluded from the room because it was considered a sacred, private space for women.

Mary was absolutely not alone. She was surrounded by aunts, cousins, and sisters-in-law. One of the earliest Christian documents outside the Bible, the Protoevangelium of James (written around 150 A.D.), explicitly records Joseph going out to find a local Hebrew midwife to help Mary. When Mary went into labor, Joseph didn't roll up his sleeves to deliver the baby. A midwife and the experienced matriarchs of the family took complete control of the room. They boiled the water, coached her through contractions, and expertly wrapped the newborn Savior.



Shifting the Focus

Look closely at what this historical truth changes. For generations, we have preached a Christmas message centered on human rejection. We preach that the world turned its back on Mary and Joseph.

We paint a picture of a lonely, isolating night.

But the history tells us the exact opposite. Jesus was met with the ultimate form of a family's care. He was absorbed into a messy, chaotic, loving environment.

God did not leave Mary and Joseph to do the impossible completely alone. He surrounded a young, pregnant teenager with a village of women who were willing to step down into a dirty, cramped cave-room to usher the Savior of the world into the light.

The Architecture of Community

There is a direct, urgent lesson here for those of us sitting in the pews today. We live in a highly independent culture. We are taught to hide our struggles, pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, and handle our heavy seasons in strict isolation. We don't want to be a burden to anyone, so we carry our weights alone.

But God did not design humanity to function in a vacuum. He built us for the cave. He designed us to need the midwife, the aunt, and the neighbor.

If God provided a supportive village for His own Son's birth, why do we think we are supposed to go through our trials alone? When we isolate ourselves during our dark seasons, we are rejecting the very mechanism God created to help us survive.

Your Action Step this Advent

I challenge you to look deep inside your own life this season. What heavy load are you trying to carry by yourself right now? What "impossible birth" are you trying to manage without letting anyone else into the room?

On the other hand, look around your church family. Who do you know that is currently sitting in a cold, dark, lower room, struggling through a hard season?

Advent is a call to step out of our comfortable, isolated upper rooms and step down into the messy spaces of each other's lives. We need to be the village. We need to boil the water, carry the cloths, and bear one another's burdens. True Christian community means refusing to let anyone give birth to their promises or bury their sorrows alone.

The Best News of All

The real beauty of the Nativity isn't that it was picture-perfect. It's that it was wonderfully, beautifully communal... by the Father's own design.

God entered our world right in the middle of family noise, human helpfulness, and ordinary love. We do not have to face the dark winters of life by ourselves. We have each other, and we have a Savior who chose to be born on the ground floor of human reality.

Now **THAT'S** good news!! Amen!

Getting To Know Your Neighbor

THIS MONTH, LET'S GET TO KNOW:

Jamie Kitts



Briefly tell us about yourself: I was born in Cass City, MI. I lost my father at age 5. My mother re-married a few years later, and we moved closer to Detroit, then to the Port Huron area for High School. I spent 4 ½ years at Central Michigan University, where I met my wonderful wife(she really is), Sandy. I am the father to three awesome adult children; Mary, Sam, and Jacinda. I really miss the kids.

How did you come to Christ? While getting to know Sandy at CMU, she introduced me to the great folks at the Wesley Foundation. There I finally read the Bible and met some fine Christian people. It was a very formative time for me.

What are your hobbies? I've played the guitar almost every day for years. So, I know some things.

Favorite Food: Pick anything likely NOT good for you! But I have learned some self-restraint.

What did/do you for a living? After four years in sales, I taught social studies and broadcasting for forty years at Montrose Hill-McCloy High School. I retired from teaching this spring.

Favorite Bible Verse: Mark 9:37 "*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*"

What's a fun fact about yourself? In 1977 I was the first Michigan high school athlete to be hit squarely on the side of the head by a discus - and live!

Travels: where have you been and where would you like to go? Last year Sandy and I went with Bishop Bard and several other UMC clergy and their spouses to Greece and Egypt for ten days. Trip of a lifetime. Sailing down the Nile for three days was epic.

Areas you serve(at church and outside of church): I am the chair of the Audit Committee and I serve on the church board. I also helped with the church garden until I was injured! These committees are where you really get to know the fine people of this congregation.

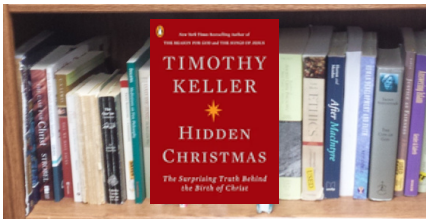


Flushing High School Chorale performance

The Genesee West chapter of MARSP invites you to join them for a special program featuring the Flushing High School Chorale Music students Tuesday, December 1st at 1:00 pm **in our sanctuary.**

Pastor's Bookshelf

BY RUTH VANDERSANDE



I am recommending the book *Hidden Christmas* by Timothy Keller for the next couple of months.

This book explores the harder truth about the birth of Jesus as told through the gospels. Keller actively pushes against the commercialized version of Jesus' birth story, one that doesn't address the reality of the day. In this book, you will be challenged to see Christmas in a new way, or perhaps reminded of how emotional and important the Christmas story is. There is so much depth and beauty in the way God laid the plans for the birth of His Son, and when we see the nuances involved, it only reminds us of how deeply God cares for each of us and wants us to be in relationship with Him. I hope you get the chance to read it.

Mens Breakfast

Calling all MEN!!
Come join us for breakfast!!



Ways To Give

PayPal Giving Fund
has no extra charges to us or you! Click here:
https://www.paypal.com/US/fundraiser/charity/391105

or scan our QR Code:

Text to give thru Vanco
Text flushingumc to 73256, followed by your gift amount,
For example:
"flushingumc $100" sent to the number 73256
or go to:
onrealm.org/FlushingUnitedM/Give

Finance Snapshot thru October 2026

Total Budget for 2026
General Fund: $300,000

Total received in Oct. 2026:

General	$	26,896
Interest	$	163
Rent	$	0
Capital Fund:	$	2,560

General Fund Expenses Paid in October: $ 20,932

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December	
Sarah Lewis	1
Trudy Grindstaff	4
Lori Stauffacher	8
Dean Mosey	11
Lindsey Wagner	11
Judy Bloodworth	16
Bob Krueger	22
Hannah Nettleton	23
Elizabeth Fonger	24
Jim Thomas	24
Jinah Chun	28
Velma Graham	28
Joyce Schlicht	28
Cathy Metz	31

January	
Zander Wilson	3
Hunter Butts	4
Robert Wimmer	6
Katherine Wheeler Mathews	8
Emma Nettleton	9
Jerry Dick	12
Lynn Schmitzer	12
Dave Lewis	15
David Shipley	19
Duane Allyn	27
Linda Alsager	28

Prayer Room

Please remember in your hearts and prayers for:

+ Dave, in hospital-partial toe removal and on dialysis
+Joey, in hospital with kidney issues
+ Karen, starting chemo therapy
+Sue dealing with oral infection after having oral cancer
+Kate, healing from knee surgery
+ Vicky, liver recipient on dialysis
+Judy, for pain relief

A Christmas Reflection

Every December, Sarah unpacked her late grandmother's battered cardboard box of Christmas decorations. Most were faded glass bulbs and tangled tinsel, except for one tiny, hand-carved wooden sheep. Its ear was chipped, and the paint had worn smooth from decades of small fingers holding it.

When Sarah was a child, she had asked why the little sheep always went right at the front of the tree, even though it wasn't shiny like the glass ornaments. Her grandmother smiled and said, "Because on that first Christmas night, the shepherds didn't bring gold or fine robes to the manger. They just brought themselves, right as they were. And that was more than enough."

This year, as Sarah hung the worn wooden sheep on a low branch, the quiet warmth of that memory settled over her. In a season full of crowded calendars, bright lights, and pressure to make everything look perfect, the little sheep offered a gentle reminder: Christ doesn't ask us to arrive polished or shiny. He simply asks us to come as we are, and make room for Him in our hearts.

Talk To Us

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Church Staff

Lead Pastor: Rev. Ruth VanderSande
Office Manager: Rose Dessinger
Christian Ed. Director: Melissa Whalen
Accompanist: Jinah Chun
Custodian: Marlene Cooper
Play Place: Lindsey Wagner,
LillieAyn Smith

Published the last Wednesday of the month
Editor: Rose Dessinger

Worship Servants

Scripture Readers 8:45am

Dec 6- Dave Lewis
Dec 13 - Carolyn Malaski
Dec 20- Larry Ridge
Dec 27 - Sue Ridge

Usher/Greeters 8:45am

Dec 6- Bill Dessinger, Bonnie Farrow
Dec 13 - Travis & Melissa Whalen
Dec 20- Dave Lewis, Tim Seaman
Dec 27 - Larry & Sue Ridge

Computer /Sound Board 8:45am

Dec 6-
Dec 13 - Travis Whalen
Dec 20- Rose Dessinger
Dec 27 -

Hospitality 10:00am

Dec 6- Bob & Linda Baker
Dec 13 - Larry & Sue Ridge
Dec 20- Dennis & Amy Kleinedler
Dec 27 - Dan & Laurie Yaklin

Worship Leader 11:15am

Dec 6- Teresa Casteel, Eric Mason
Dec 13 - Autumn Cichowski
Dec 20- Cathy Riley
Dec 27 - Kris Supernaw, Eric Mason

FLUSHING UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
413 E MAIN ST
FLUSHING MI 48433-2029

Together In Faith

November 25, 2026– Issue #11

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