



105 E. Main
Street

Ionia, MI
48846

Service

9:30 am

www.ioniafirst.com

616-527-1860

**December
2025
Newsletter**



THE PASTOR'S PEN

Ionia First

December 2025

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger. "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)

In their appearance to the shepherds, the angels gave praise to God and proclaimed the good and joyful news that the promised Messiah had come; an infant born in humble settings and wrapped not in splendor, but in peasant clothing.

Great things often come in humble wrappings. Such was the case with the arrival of Jesus, Israel's promised Messiah. Jesus, the Messiah (Christ) came to begin the evolution of God's reign an era of peace and goodwill that comes about through the complete trust person have in God.

God's reign also springs from humble beginnings, taking root and slowly growing each time a person through faith in Jesus Christ, begins a new life journey guided by a total and complete trust in God. As the community of faith grows, so also does the reign of God, expanding and taking in new believers until it bursts forth in full blossom as God's glorious Kingdom of peace and love.

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Continuation of “Pastor’s Pen”

Ultimately, this I believe is what our Advent wait is about, this is what we anticipate. By our faith and unwavering service, the long awaited and anticipated Kingdom of God will come.

Advent also signals the end of the old and beginning of the new. We are ending a wonderful year and have high hopes for more blessings in the year to come. Our congregation has been faithful in mission, providing support to many deserving ministries that help persons in need.

Looking back, faithfulness can be seen in many ways. Ionia First has been fruitful in mission and ministry. Our congregation has supported numerous community programs and has opened its doors to outside agencies, holding concerts and a weekly food program conducted by the Zion Methodist Church.

The Community Drawers ministry provided personal household assistance to many families. Community Drawers is able to keep its light shining bright through the fund-raising skills of Rebecca Brown and the tireless efforts of volunteers such as Michelle, who makes purchases, Janet who keeps records, faithful congregation members who provide support (Roxie, Virginia, Ken, Sue, Linda, Kay, Karsen, Ann, Dave, Joe, Don) who did I leave out?

Oh, Yes. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to you!

By the time you receive this newsletter, our community would have enjoyed listening to the Great Lakes Chorus who performed at Ionia First Sunday December 7.

Christmas Eve Worship will be Wednesday December 24 at 7:00 pm. I hope you can attend.

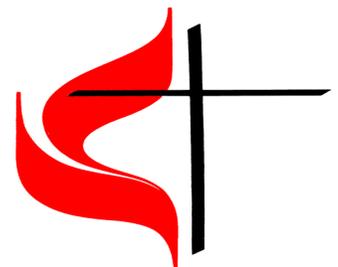
We will continue our visioning process in 2026. Let's see what God will do!

As we look back on the closing year, let's remember to be ever thankful to God, by whose grace we have persisted to enjoy a new year.

Have a wonderful and Spirit-filled Advent and Christmas!

Lamarr

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Traditional Worship
Communion Every Sunday
Sunday Morning Service at 09:30



Administration Board Report

Everyone's support for the Great Lakes Chorus concert was appreciated. Thank you to Joe and Rebecca Brown, Michell and Bob Boehm for supervising the kitchen and food preparation. Rececca also supplied the dining tables and church entrance decorations. Andrew Badder spent the day Sunday making sure all concert details were handled. He also set up and decorated the sanctuary Christmas tree and the café Christmas tree. Books and other items from the former nursery were delivered to Enrich by Andrew as part of the repurposing of that space. This was a great help!

Dave and Roxie Stiles handled the donations from concert goers and Sue Manciu, Eric Asher, Ken and Ann Felice greeted our guest and answered questions. Thanks also to Joel who assisted the chorus members with microphones. All in all, it was a group effort and all who attended had a good time and a chance for fellowship with friends.

Speaking of repurposing the nursery room, after clearing out the room, the carpeting was cleaned and Fonda Kasper painted the room. Several items were donated to Habitate for Humanity and more items will be going to Enrich. The chorus members appreciated a space for changing clothes and having their own bathroom. Thanks to Dave, our custodian, for making sure the room was cleaned and supplied with necessary items.

Linda Ciangi,
Ad. Board Chair

SPRC -
Jan Powell

Dear Friends,

I hope that all of you had a very blessed Thanksgiving and are looking forward to a beautiful and meaningful Advent Season.

At the beginning of the year, the SPRC will conduct staff evaluations. Be sure to thank them for the work done with a giving heart. Every once in a while, think of a way to show your gratitude.

Jan



Missions

We received a want/need list from RAVE which is Relief Against Violent Encounter, which is here in Ionia. I turned the list over to Community Drawers, and they were able to completely fill the list. Thank you Community Drawers

Missions for the month of December is to go to the Groves in Zambia. We have been supporting their missionary work for at least 20 years. Their dedication is amazing. Please be generous.

Thanks

Jan



Trustee News

The lower portion of the roof is completed. We are dealing with some leaks which the contractor is coming back to fix. Flat roofs are not the best roofing systems in Michigan.

The organ has been cleaned and tuned. It was found there are still some problems with parts which need to be replaced. The organ repair people will be coming back to finish when parts are available. The pianos were tuned also and sound good.

Snow removal for the parking lot and sidewalk is in the process. I-Cut Lawn care is the contractor for the snow removal. They will be plowing on the weekends for any snowfall 2" or greater. They will be cleaning the sidewalks any day it is needed. During the weekdays, the county plows the parking lot. So far this is working out well.

We are fixing a long list of small repairs. It seems as we get one problem taken care of another one or two or three pop up.

Trustee meetings are on the [First Friday of the month at 10:00 a.m.](#) Everyone is invited. [January 2026 Meeting will be the second Friday](#) due to January first is on that Thursday and Friday is part of the long New Year weekend.

See you in Church, Be Safe,

Joe



Community Drawers News

Well, we were again very busy in November with over 100 people and I believe there were over 25 families. We again gave out more coats and shoes and boots. People have great need. In the first hour and a half we gave out 48 bed pillows. (Please keep in mind they can only get bed pillows one time only. So we are having new and different people every month.) I will start writing to the corporations and foundations we apply to for grants right after Christmas, so if you want to see how that all works or you would like to help with doing the grant writing please let me know, all help is appreciated.

We at Community Drawers who are supposed to be the leaders are so very thankful for all the help we get for this project. Every one of the people who help shop to the ones who clip price tags to the ones who bundle the items we give away to the girls who do the card file and the computer THANK YOU Michell needs the biggest THANK YOU.

She has become my right arm and I am so grateful for her and her skills at shopping and organizing. When we started this Great Experiment **5 years ago**, Pastor Jonathan Bratt Carle said "This is just what is needed, run with it I will get you some Help." Starting six years now we are taking care of our community the way the Lord Taught us.

Thank You

Rebecca Brown, Chairperson Community Drawers,

Office News

Just to bring you up to date on the office. Everything seems to be running smoothly, though I probably should not have said that, something will break. That is the way it goes. I want to say Thank You to Roxanne Stiles who helps when I need her which sometimes seems like a lot of the time. Thank You Roxie. Also thanks to Joel Kilgore who does so much more than most people realize and another thank you to Andrew Badder who all I have to do is call and whatever I need doing is done. Thank you Joe, for everything you do for me here in the office and everywhere else, I love you. Lastly I need to thank Pastor Lamarr who is the best Pastor I have had a chance to work with here at First Church.

I hope all my friends and family here at First Church has a wonderful Holiday. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Reminders

IM KIDS 3rd Meal

- This is an ongoing mission. We are helping to feed over 830 kids each day for their third meal. They are accepting the following items:
 - Peanut butter
 - Jelly or jam
 - Fruit bars
 - Applesauce cups
 - Fruit boxes
 - Snack packs
 - Juice boxes - must be 100 % juice
 - Dry cereal
 - Brown paper lunch bags
- **Please Help fill the two Front Pews of our Church. We will deliver it to where it needs to go.**



IM SAFE CAC

Ionia Montcalm Secure and Friendly Environment
Child Advocacy Center

December Birthdays

12/19 Peg Norman

12/20 Greg Hotchkin



Prayer Requests

Phil Kahl
Miller & Greg Hotchkin

Please send prayer requests to
616-527-1860 or Email to
Bluebirdm66@yahoo.com



December Liturgists

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| 07 | Rebecca Brown |
| 14 | Eric Asher |
| 21 | Jan Powell |
| 24 | All Liturgists |
| 28 | Deanna Hotchkin |

December 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 Trustee Meeting 10:00	6
7 AI	8	9	10	11	12 Worship Meeting 11:00	13
14 Noisy Offering	15	16	17 1:30 to 4:30 - Community Drawers	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve service 7:00	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 Blue Water Café 11:00	29 DEADLINE FOR NEWS LETTER	30	31			

