



Greetings, all! Calendars are good things to have. They help you keep track of all sorts of things –appointments, birthdays, anniversaries, and various activities. A favorite author of mine helps me keep track of national days like national chocolate chip cookie day. Depending on your family situation, the boxes on the calendar may be fairly empty, or full and color-coded, with a different color for each person or activity.

In the church year we are always either preparing for something or celebrating something, or taking time to grow. Each part of the church year is symbolized by a particular color.

Much like our life calendars are divided and subdivided into months, weeks, and days, the church calendar has divisions as well – cycles and seasons. The following information comes from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/colors-for-the-christian-year>. Access to this information is free, by virtue of churches paying their Ministry Shares/Appportionment dollars.

“The Christian year contains two cycles: the Christmas Cycle (Advent–Christmas–Epiphany) and the Easter Cycle (Lent–Easter–Pentecost). Within each cycle are a preparatory season symbolized by the color purple and a festival season symbolized by the color white. After each cycle there is an ordinary time of growth symbolized by the color green. Thus there is a sequence of seasons using purple, white, and green in that order twice each year.

“Purple is a color of both penitence and royalty used during the preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent. Blue, a color of hope, may also be used during Advent.

“White and gold are joyous and festive colors used during the Christmas and Easter Seasons (except on the Day of Pentecost) and in other seasons on festive days such as Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Trinity, All Saints, and Christ the King. White may also be used at weddings and at services where the Sacrament of Baptism is central. White is recommended at services of death and resurrection because it symbolizes both death and resurrection. At services of Holy Communion white linens on top of the Lord's table are customary, but the par-aments hanging over the front or sides of the table and the other visuals should reflect the day or season of the year.

“Green is a color of growth, used in the Seasons after the Epiphany and after Pentecost, except when special days call for white or red.

“Red is a color of fire, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. It is used on the Day of Pentecost and at other times when the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Red is also the color of blood—the blood of Christ and the blood of martyrs. Because of its intensity, red is most effective when used occasionally rather than continuously for a whole season. It is appropriate for evangelistic services, for ordinations and consecrations, for church anniversaries and homecomings, and for civil observances such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day or Memorial Day. It may be used beside white and gold through the Easter Season. It may be used during Holy Week, beginning with Passion/Palm Sunday, to symbolize the blood of Christ.

“Although use of these colors is based on broad ecumenical tradition, other colors have been and are being used in Christian churches. Creativity with colors and other signs for days and seasons is encouraged.”



Announcements & Upcoming Events for January

MEETING INFO FOR JANUARY

Trustee Meeting

The next Trustee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 2, 2019 at 6 pm. Frank would like everyone to know that ALL are welcome and encouraged to attend the Trustee Meetings.

Ad. Council & Finance Team Meeting

Our next Finance/Ad. Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at 7 pm.

UMW Meeting

The UMW will meet on Wednesday, January 23, at 1 pm.

Brew & Chew

There will be NO Brew & Chew gathering in January. Brew & Chew will resume in February.

JANUARY EVENTS

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry will be closed for the Holidays December 25 - January 2. The Food Pantry will re-open on Thursday, January 3, at 9 am.

Blood Drive **DATE CHANGE******

Wednesday, January 16, 2019 the Litchfield UMC will host another Red Cross Blood Drive. If you would like to help, there will be a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board.

Pastor Mary - vacation scheduled

Pastor Mary will be on vacation beginning Tuesday, January 8 through Wednesday, January 16. Should you need pastoral care during this time, please contact the church office.

Special Sunday in January

Sunday, January 20, 2019, there will be a special offering collected for Human Relation's Day during our 9:45 am worship service.

Newsletter Article Deadline

Please have all newsletter articles turned in by **3 pm, Thursday, January 24**. Thank you!!

Thank you!!

Thank you to all who donated toward our Angel Tree gifts, helped prepare food baskets, and helped to distribute gifts and food baskets to local families. The holidays can be a very difficult time for families. It is always such a warm feeling to know that you are helping to make a child smile Christmas morning, or a mother and father not worry what they would have to make for dinner on Christmas day, and that my friends is the true spirit of Christmas, acting as a disciple of Christ by helping our neighbors in need. I can honestly say, I am beyond proud to be a part of Litchfield UMC and I love to see all the wonderful ministries that seem to fall right into place, right at the perfect time. (And by perfect, I mean making Ella sweat just a little thinking one of the sets of Angel Tree gifts was forgotten because your forgetful church secretary left the house without grabbing the gifts she bought from under her tree!! Wink wink!!) All is well and many families were happy with full tummy's because you are all awesome people and made that happen!! God Bless each and everyone of you!! I hope you and your families had a very blessed Christmas and New Year!!

Game On!



Game shows on television and radio have been around since the 1930's. All of them have contestants who have an opportunity to win cash or prizes. There are deals to be made, questions to answer, answers with questions, and all with time limits. There have been pyramids, squares, wheels, flippers, flappers, and plenty of celebrity guest involvement. Some of these game shows even have the contestant use a friend to contact and help answer the question.

“Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.” Romans 15:2

There is a new game show on Friday night primetime called “Child Support”. The adult contestant has a chance to win big money if able to answer all 10 questions. There's no one category. Questions range from science to fashion, cartoons to food, and more. Sometimes, it's possible to reason/think through a question to come up correctly, other times either you know it or you don't. In this game a wrong answer will bring on the Child Support team via previously taped session. Kids... yep kids, that range in age from about 8 to 13 years old. A panel of 5 boys and girls are asked the same question. In a casual conference type room with a camera filming, they answer. It is fun to watch their innocence and answers. They speak the truth - right or wrong, something is said - sometimes even to blurt out the correct answer. They can guess, but most often they do know the answer. It's a panel to help someone stay in the game.

“Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

So, if the contestant answers correctly, they move up to the next questions. The show still checks in on the kids with their answer for fun. If the contestant is wrong, but the kids get it right, the game continues, but for less cash. If the kids get it wrong while trying to save a contestant, well, game over. Just imagine having a support team made up of 5 kids all seated at a table knowing they could help you.

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, each has a brief paragraph about Jesus and children.

“I assure you anyone who doesn't have their (child-like) kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God.” Mark 10:15

What's interesting is the kids press on. They don't show the pressure to those life's questions. They certainly rejoice in fun ways when any one of them is correct. Some of the best part of the show is watching them cheer each other on in good faith.

As we move into a new calendar year, give thanks and praise to the many who support each of us in various ways.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 11:24-25

Happy New Year!!
Ron Giacobassi

Summary of the Connectional Conference Plan

The Connectional Conference Plan (CCP) values remaining in relationship (unified mission and witness) while respecting different views. It navigates the conflict and theological impasses around LGBTQI marriage and ordination through a restructuring of The UMC's connectional life by replacing jurisdictional conference in the United States with "connectional conferences."

In the United States, three new values-based connectional conferences (CCs) - progressive, traditional, and unity - will be created to align by convictions and not geography. These three missional "spaces" represent 6 faithful but differing readings of scripture and the culturally specific needs of the contexts they serve. Central conferences can remain in their current configuration (with a new CC name), join one of the new U.S. CCs (making it a global conference) or form new CC attuned to regional and missional commitments.

Theological and Biblical Foundations (29-30) The CCP affirms that space and for contextual ministry and a common mission are possible. It addresses the present conflict with a strategy for redefining the connection for more effective mission and ministry so all "embody the divine love in the midst of our diversity and disagreement" (30).

With the CCP, each CC creates its own Book of Discipline to include shared core convictions / organizational portions of the General Book of Discipline and adapted sections specific to their context (e.g., policies on LGBTQ weddings, ordination, credentialing and approved schools/seminaries). They may also create their own "connectional conference judicial courts" with authority to rule based on their specific Book of Discipline but subject to appeal to the Judicial Council.

The CCP requires a much longer implementation timeframe than do the other plans, with meetings, analysis, votes, and other transition work required between 2019 and 2025. The process begins with voting by jurisdictional conferences (2020) to select CC affiliation (progressive, traditional or unity). ACs that disagree with their jurisdictional conference's decision can vote to join a different CC. After that, local churches that disagree with their AC's decision can vote to join a different CC. Jurisdictional conferences, ACs and local churches retain all property and liabilities, which follow them to the new CC.

Summary of the Traditional Plan

Managing difference and diversity around human sexuality through accountability, certification and intentional, "gracious" division, the TP respects differing theological understandings by "giving each a space" (63) through new ways of being in relationship.

The TP reflects a commitment to:

(1) disciplinary accountability, clear consequences and enforced penalties for violating proposed broadened language on human sexuality in The Book of Discipline (BOD); (2) missional unity and alignment with the global church's stance on human sexuality without the distraction of trials and conflict resolution processes; (3) an approach to contextuality that resolves the impasse over differing views of faithfulness related to human sexuality with intentional and strategic division into separate Wesleyan denominations.

Calling for greater accountability from bishops, clergy, credentialing bodies and conferences, the Traditional Plan promises space, freedom, flexibility and missional vitality by reinforcing the current definition of marriage and global United Methodist teaching on human sexuality. It offers greater contextuality through "one unified moral stance on the issues of marriage and sexuality." (63). The TP respects "different theological understandings" by redefining our current connectional life, creating separate spaces for authentic, contextual ministry with people with differing views (63).

The TP broadens the definition of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" and provides for stipulated, "gracious" separation for those who cannot conform and be accountable to revised disciplinary language defining human sexuality and the qualifying rules governing the candidacy and ordination of clergy. It offers an extensive new plan (proposed 2801, "Implementing Gracious Accountability") for the creation of self-governing churches outside The United Methodist Church with a "new connectional status" and autonomy to engage in contextualized ministry with LGBTQI people - people who are also welcome to remain, worship, and become members of the UMC.

Summary of the Traditional Plan, Continued...

Theological and Biblical Foundations of the Traditional Plan and Our Mission (64) The TP takes seriously the need for “greater contextualization” of mission and suggests that division, departure, and the “formation of a new Wesleyan denomination” present “an opportunity for a different type of unity... for the sake of mission.” Parting ways on the issue of human sexuality is a fitting response to the missional and contextual needs of our time: “It is appropriate for there to be two different Wesleyan bodies who teach differently” on same-gender marriage.

The TP promises to free progressives to pursue a fully inclusive version of Methodism to best reach people of all gender identities while assuring that traditional United Methodists can continue to be in mission and ministry with those valuing “traditional teaching” on marriage and sexuality.

Summary of the One Church Plan

The OCP reflects the COWF’s commitment to balance church unity with the demands of distinct ministry contexts and varying views of faithfulness. Remaining in relationship (unified effort and witness) while respecting different views is the goal of a plan that promises room to maximize witness and honor conscience, conviction, and the contextuality of our shared global mission.

The OCP proposes an adaptable, “generous unity” without disbanding the “connectional nature” that makes global mission possible. It pledges the least disruption to United Methodist ministries, creating space for both traditionalists and progressives by providing space, freedom, flexibility and missional vitality through contextualized ministry. The OCP redefines marriage, removes restrictive language related to same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQI people and adds language protecting the religious freedom of pastors, bishops, and conferences who as a matter of conscience do not support these practices. No one is required to “act contrary to their convictions.”

For those who want change, it creates space for ministry without violating the Discipline. It also reinforces the existing freedom of:

* local churches to set wedding policies

* pastors to decide whom to marry, * and bishops and annual conference boards of ordained ministry and clergy sessions to discern, recommend, and credential those called to and suited for ordained ministry.

Churches may choose but will not be required to host same-sex weddings. Pastors are neither required to nor prohibited from performing same-sex marriage, union, or blessing ceremonies. Local congregations, conferences, and pastors are not required to vote. It puts an end to the threat of church trials on charges related to ministry by, with and for LGBTQI people and maintains the current leadership structure of the church. General boards and agencies continue their service and work. Affiliated institutions can remain connected. Wespath would continue to provide pension services to clergy.

It also calls for jurisdictional conferences and Episcopal areas in the United States to provide the financial support for bishops and their offices, while maintaining the current general church support of the episcopacy in central conferences. Any who cannot remain in connection may depart with grace following current Book of Discipline (BOD) processes.

Theological and Biblical Foundations of the One Church Plan The OCP affirms that space for contextual ministry and a common mission are possible. Based on thoughtful readings of scripture (John 17:20-26, 1 Corinthians 12:26, Romans 14:19, Acts 5:38) and United Methodist history around the decision to ordain women, the OCP stresses that the current impasse over human sexuality need not divide the church. The OCP provides space for an empowering connection unified by world-transforming, disciple-driven mission and the flexibility to alleviate suffering and meet people on the margins. It also provides the freedom and assurances that pastors, congregations, bishops, annual conferences, and the global ministry of the central conferences can honor conscience and the context of ministry.

Prayers Needed

Prayers for those in nursing homes and assisted living: Elnora Beckner, Marilyn Wade, Fran Wells, Ruth Wooden, Doris Blonde, Annie Wolfe and Nancy Gaige.

Family and Friends:

Hazel Rice	Michael Ireland Sr.	Frank Hiser
Patty Johnson	Barb Bederstadt	Pam Crothers
Jim Wildt	Dealia Bigelow	Sharon Caruso
Mary McMillen	Harold Sprouse	Jim Myers
Jean Sykes	Donna Domack	Cherri Wolfe

Vance Bender

The Family & Friends of Mary Cooley's Father

Prayers for contributions for our Church's General Fund.

Prayers for our missionaries serving around the world.



Liturgy, Children's Church, & Refreshment Schedule

LITURGIST

January 6 -

Jeff Sweet

January 13 -

Val Griffiths

January 20 -

Tim Chilson

January 27 -

Cheryl Sykes

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

January 6 - Sheila Gary

January 13 - Sheila Gary

January 20 - Lorie Dickinson

January 27 - Sheila Gary

COFFEE HOUR

January 6 -

Ron & Velvet Jacobassi

January 13 -

Carl & Cheryl Sykes

January 20 -

Ella Hamrick & Carol Ireland

January 27 -

Janice Teller, Janice Hamilton, & Barb Brewer

Ten Prayers for the New Year ~ Rabbi Evan

- Looking Backward and Forward:** The name January comes from the Roman God "Janus." He had two faces so he could look forward and backward at the same time. Eternal God, help us to know this truth. WE can look back, and in so doing, we can help create the way forward. The past need not hold us back. It can lead us ahead.
- Unwrap the Gift:** Eternal God, You gave us the greatest gift: the gift of life. In the coming year, help us use it wisely. May we grow in generosity, kindness and forgiveness, hope, faith, and love. Amen.
- Beginnings are blessings:** Eternal God, bless this new beginning with an extra spirit of your strength, so that we may turn our days into blessings of your name. Amen.
- Possibilities:** To begin again is not a dream. It is an everlasting possibility. God, give us the eyes to see it, the ears to hear and the heart to find it. Amen.
- The Book of Life:** A new year is a new page in the book of our lives. May we write with color, wisdom and humility. And may your grace fall upon it consistently and unceasingly. Amen.
- Waiting for Us:** The good we missed last year waits for us still. Eternal God, give us the eyes to see it, the ears to hear and the heart to find it. Amen.
- Strength:** God, we do not ask for a life of ease and comfort. We simply ask to be uncomplaining and unafraid. May you give us that strength for the New Year.
- The Possibility for Change:** The Hebrew word for "year" also means "change." Change is a possibility for each of us. May we embrace that possibility for change within ourselves, change within our families, change within our communities, and change within our world.
- Change is inevitable:** Growth is not. It depends on our will, our hopes, our dreams. And it rests on Your Grace. Give us an extra portion of it, so that we may fill the New Year with our Presence. Amen.
- Presence:** The greatest gift we can give to others and You can give to us, Oh God, is Presence. May we be present for others during the coming year, and may you bless us with Your Presence at every moment. Amen.

JANUARY

2019

L-Litchfield UMC J-Jonesville UMC

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 2019 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2 Trustee Meeting 6 pm	3 Food Pantry Re-opens at 9 am	4	5
6 9:45 am L Worship 11 am J Worship Holy Communion Service	7 Rotary 12 pm Bible Study 6 pm	8 Pastor Mary's vacation begins	9 Ad. Council & Finance Team Meeting 7 pm	10	11	12
13 9:45 am L Worship 11 am J Worship	14 Rotary 12 pm Bible Study 6 pm	15	16 Blood Drive 12 pm Pastor Mary returns from vacation	17	18	19
20 9:45 am L Worship 11 am J Worship Human Relations Day	21 Rotary 12 pm Bible Study 6 pm	22	23 UMW Meeting 1 pm	24	25	26
27 9:45 am L Worship 11 am J Worship	28 Rotary 12 pm Bible Study 6 pm	29	30	31		

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 - Derek Collins
- 4 - Laura Cierpilowski
- 5 - Keith Blonde
- 6 - Hazel Rice
- 13 - Toni Sharp
- 20 - James Wildt
- 27 - Ruth Reinhart



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 26 - Dan & Deborah Smith





Litchfield United Methodist Church
160 Marshall Street
P. O. Box 472
Litchfield, MI 49252

Church Office Phone: 517-542-3366
Email: umclitchfield@gmail.com or
lumc@dmcibb.net
[Facebook.com/litchfieldumc](https://www.facebook.com/litchfieldumc)
Website: www.umclitchfield.org
Pastor Mary Sweet
Email: pastormarysweet@aol.com
Parsonage Phone: 517-793-1014

Office Hours: Monday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Food Pantry Hours: Monday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

Worship - 9:45 a.m.

With Children's Church & Nursery As Needed

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The Mission of the Litchfield United Methodist Church

Is to help people come to know Christ,

Grow in Christ, and to love and serve others.