



# The Asbury BEACON

January 2026

Volume 26, Number 1

## THE VISION OF ASBURY

*To Form Disciples of Jesus Christ Who Empowered by The Holy Spirit, Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, and Lead Courageously in Local Communities and Worldwide Connections.*

## THE MISSION OF ASBURY

*To Inspire People of all Generations to Love, Learn, and Lead Through Worship, Education, and Service.*

## THE ASBURY MOTTO

*No Matter Where You Are on Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!*

## What Does Christmas Mean to Me?

This year during Advent, I participated in a Bible Study using a book by Ruth L. Boling entitled, Seasons Greetings. In her book, Ruth Boling creates letters that could have been written by 12 different characters from the Bible, who were living around Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. The letters are possible responses to the question, "What Christmas Means to Me." At the end of the 12 letters, the author encourages us to write our own letter describing what Christmas means to us. Below is my letter:

Dear Friends in Faith,

When I was a teenager, Christmas was a magic time of anticipation. I would stare at the presents under the tree wondering what was underneath the pretty wrapping paper. It was around this time that I began attending the Christmas Eve Candlelight service at Asbury UMC. It became the highlight of the Christmas Season for me. I loved how we passed the light from the Christ Candle to each person in the pews, and how the light seemed to overtake the darkness in the sanctuary as we sang "O Holy Night" and "Silent Night". From that point on, the Christmas Eve Service has been an important part of my Christmas. As a mother of 3, my focus turned to my children and making their Christmas special every year. There was such joy in their faces as they came down and saw that Santa had been there. The excitement continued as they opened each gift that Santa had left for them. As the weeks and months passed, the new toys became old and the joy faded.

Once my children left home, Christmas became about the events leading up to Christmas. The concerts and Christmas music. (During December you will hear Christmas carols blasting both in my apartment and in my car, and you will often hear me singing along.) "O Holy Night" and "Silent Night" always bring a tear to my eyes. I love driving around and seeing the lights on people's houses and down Main Street in Sackets Harbor.

Even though I put away the Christmas lights and the Christmas music goes away, the light that Jesus brought to this earth still shines in my heart all year.

What does Christmas mean to me? December 25th is a reminder to me that God came to earth in the human form of his only son to show us that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overtake it. He came to remind us that He loves all of us and that is something that no one can ever take away. Christmas is a reminder of that night over 2000 years ago when a babe was born to a virgin in a manger. That babe brought us joy, love, peace and hope. These are the things that help me move forward into a new year. My hope is renewed every December 25th. - A hope that everyone can someday see and share the light that shines in our hearts and in the darkness that surrounds it.



**THIS IS WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME.**  
**What does Christmas mean to you?**

Sue Beaman

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January 2 Kerry Roberge  
January 4 Jaydon Ives  
January 9 Darrel Kicherer  
January 14 Frances Goutremout  
January 16 Jaelah Liriano  
January 17 Bonnie Peck  
January 17 Erica Pettit  
January 27 David Simmons  
January 29 Dan Webb



February 1 Shevee Ives  
February 3 James Wright  
February 3 David Witte  
February 5 Deborah Simmons  
February 9 Karen Boomhower  
February 17 Nicole Lamica  
February 23 Kathy Ruhm  
February 24 Bina West  
February 24 Max Bovee



**Lawrence and Kathleen Woodruff**  
February 14, 2004

**Max and Greta Bovee**  
February 18, 1984



Pastor Michael will deliver a sermon series entitled "On the Way With Jesus," which will guide the congregation through the Lenten season and culminate on Easter Sunday, April 5. The themes and associated scripture readings for each sermon are provided below for those who wish to prepare in advance.

**Sunday, Feb. 15:** *On the Mountaintop* - Matthew 17:1-9

**Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18:** *With Gratitude & Humility* - Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**Sunday, Feb. 22:** *In the Wilderness* - Matthew 4:1-11

**Sunday, Mar. 1:** *Transformed* - John 4:5-42

**Sunday, Mar. 8:** *Sent* - John 9:1-41

**Sunday, Mar. 15:** *When the Way Means Staying Home* - John 11:1-45

**Sunday, Mar. 22:** *When the Way Is Hard* - Matthew 26:14-27:66

**Palm Sunday, Mar. 29 :** *Facing Death* - John 18:1-19:42

**Easter Sunday, April 5:** *Forgiven* - Matthew 28:1-10

The deadline for articles for Asbury's FEBRUARY newsletter is **Thursday, January 22, 2026**. Please email articles and pictures to Sue Beaman at [asburybeacon@gmail.com](mailto:asburybeacon@gmail.com) in WORD format or give them to Faith in the church office.

## Dear Asbury Family,

As we step into a new year, our hearts overflow with gratitude for God's abundant blessings. We have witnessed God's provision, God's grace, and God's faithfulness time and again. Truly, God has been good to us.

Yet Scripture reminds us that God's ability far exceeds our expectations. What lies ahead is not limited by what we have seen before. God is always at work, often in ways beyond what we can imagine or predict.

I'm reminded of a small church that prayed for modest growth, only to see God expand their ministry far beyond what they expected - not through numbers alone, but through transformed lives and renewed purpose. God delights in blessing God's people in ways that surprise and encourage them.

As we move forward, may we do so with thankful hearts and expectant spirits. Trusting God for "immeasurably more," we step into this year confident that the best is yet to come.

As we begin 2026, I personally invite you to join us for worship! Our Asbury family is growing, and there are many new faces to welcome and greet. Let us begin 2026 with gratitude, lift our prayers with expectancy, and ask God to pour out God's blessings in our lives and families, and for our church. It's a beautiful way to set the tone for the year ahead. With thanksgiving and joyful anticipation, enjoying the journey with you,

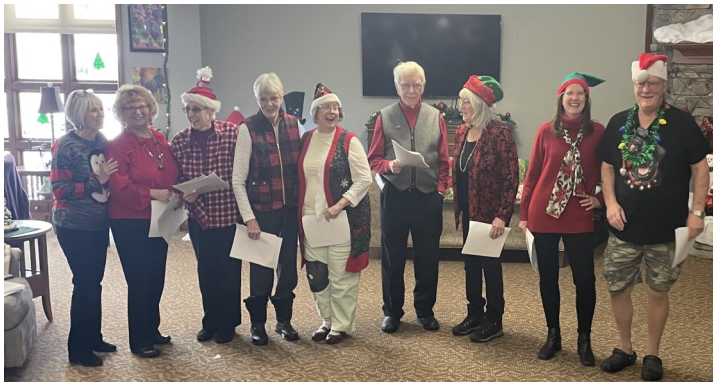
*Pastor Michael*

Happy New Year ♥ Happy New Year ♥ Happy New Year



Rejoice  
in hope,  
be patient  
in tribulation,  
be constant  
in prayer.

Romans 12:12, ESV



## Joyful Noise and Jingle Bells

Ten members of our church recently bundled up, broke out the jingle bells, and spread Christmas cheer during a caroling visit to The Lodge at Ives Hill and Centennial Apartments. Dressed in festive Christmas attire, including ugly Christmas sweaters, silly hats, and plenty of holiday sparkle, the group was ready to sing and smile.

We shared a mix of upbeat Christmas songs and beloved traditional carols, handing out song sheets so residents could join in. And join in they did. The halls were filled with singing, laughter, and joyful memories as voices blended and spirits lifted.

We enjoyed visiting with the residents, and soaking in the joy of the season together. It was a wonderful reminder that a little music, a lot of laughter, and a few jingle bells can go a long way in spreading Christmas joy.



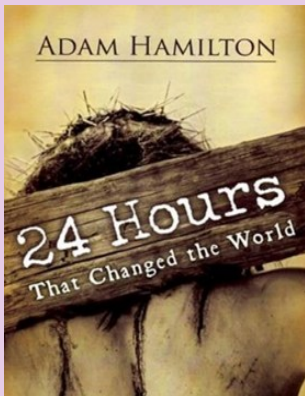
## Sharing Joy Through Service

A small but mighty group from our church recently gathered to bless others through a heartfelt project. Ten women and one man collaborated to create gift baskets for senior members of our congregation, many of whom are homebound, along with a few staff members.

Everyone contributed by shopping for items, assembling the baskets, wrapping them, and adding festive touches. The experience did not end there. Each participant then delivered one or two baskets, enjoying precious visits and reconnecting with friends who are not able to attend church regularly.

The project was filled with fellowship, generosity, and joy. It was a beautiful example of how working together can strengthen our church family and spread God's love beyond our walls.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”



## Lenten Bible Study for 2026

February 22, March 1, 8, 15, & 22  
6:30 P.M., in the Parlor

24 Hours That Changed the World

by Adam Hamilton

There is a large print edition for \$12.99 and  
an eBook for \$10.79 through [Cokesbury.com](http://Cokesbury.com)

Adam Hamilton guides us, step by step, through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life in his popular, heartbreaking, and inspiring book.

No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this book, Hamilton will help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion.