

THE MESSENGER

August 2026



"Bringing People to Christ And Christ to People"

*The Will of God will never take you where the
Grace of God will not protect you!*

Joe Leonard is the guest columnist this month in Pastor Jay's absence. The opinions expressed by Joe are not necessarily those of Pastor Jay, staff, Church Council, Godfrey First UMC, his family, or The Dull Men's Club (yes, that's a real thing), but they should be. In past issues, Pastor Jay has used the practice of Lectio Divina, a four part process to read scripture: Read, Reflect, Respond, and Rest. I'm going to use a three part process called Lectio Domino: Read, Reflect, and Eat some pizza.

I'm writing this as the Ignite Youth Choir closes another season. (more on that later in this issue). Each Sunday, our youth have shared the Good News of Christ throughout our community. This year's program consisted of songs in various styles; contemporary, traditional, gospel, and southern gospel. Our 10 seniors were featured in a song called Undivided. In our 12 seasons, this is the only song we've done 3 times. It's such a powerful message that even though we worship in different ways, have different traditions, and have different theologies, we all worship the same Jesus Christ. In a world where there are over 45,000 different Christian denominations, according to the Center for Study of Global Christianity, there are bound to be areas in which we do not agree. That's all fine and good until we allow those differences to become our identity.

One of the biggest debates we have in the youth room is whether or not pineapple belongs on pizza. There are some people with very passionate opinions, and hills that they are willing to die on. But, we don't separate ourselves by those opinions. We don't have a Pro-Pineapple section of the youth room. We don't have Anti-Pineapple people leaving our youth group. We have figured out a way to sit by each other, interact with each other, and love each other, because in the end, we all love pizza no matter how it's served.

How cool would it be if we could do the same thing in real life situations? (I'm not trying to minimize your pizza pas-

sion). There are things that naturally divide us; age, gender, geography, etc. But we are also living in a time where we seem to look for ways to be divided. We seem to look for ways to be offended or upset. We seem to look for ways to be triggered. As long as the Pro-Pineapple people don't expect me to eat their pizza, they can feel free to enjoy it! It's not my thing, and that's ok. I don't have to like it. But I also shouldn't tell them they're wrong for doing so, and vice versa.

GPS Youth will start in a few weeks, and in our first meeting, I set the expectations for the group. Knowing that we all come from different faith backgrounds and traditions, and that we're all at different points in our faith journey, everyone is free to ask questions and share opinions without judgement. I show a slide that says, "I may not understand it. I may not agree with it. I may not like it. But, I am a safe space for you." We're not always successful, but the groundwork for grace and understanding of each other and our differences is established. When you're certain you're right and everyone else is wrong, and you leave no room for understanding, tolerance, or grace, division occurs. This quote is from the movie Conclave.

"....let me tell you that the one sin I have come to fear more than any other is certainty. Certainty is the great enemy of unity. Certainty is the deadly enemy of tolerance. Even Christ was not certain at the end.....Our faith is a living thing precisely because it walks hand in hand with doubt. If there was only certainty, and if there was no doubt, there would be no mystery, and therefore no need for faith."

— Robert Harris, Conclave

Everyone is welcome in the youth room, even those who like pineapple on their pizza.

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Our Mission

To be a place where people **COME** to know Jesus Christ, **GROW**, in Christian relationship and understanding, and **GO** into the world as servants of Christ. We strive to be faithful to this mission as we minister in and to our community."





Remembered in Prayer



Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.

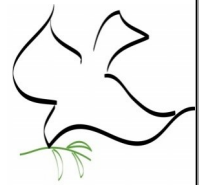
~ James 5: 14

- Ray Corethers—health concern.
- Travel Mercies for Team Honduras—mission group based out of Main Street UMC who left July 19 for Honduras. They made it there safely and will be busy for the next 2 weeks. Our prayers are with them
- Rodger Fehland—had successful heart surgery and is home recovering! Submitted by Barb Hammond.
- Joy of an awesome trip to Branson with the Ignite Youth Choir
- Sophie—Linda Grames' 16 year old niece was in a serious car accident and is in intensive care in Madison, WI.
- Sue Ansell—continued concerns with her wrist and has been to the hospital multiple times for a prolonged viral illness.
- Greg Reynolds who is having heart valve surgery—submitted by Cheri Trusty.
- Marcy Reed—Al & Pat Reed's daughter diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Don Long, Sr.—out of the hospital after surgery and is now at Wesley Village in Macomb for rehab.
- Todd Witt—health concern
- Kim Thompson—friend of Linda Grames with a health concern.
- Dean and Jan Dodson—Due to Dean's declining health, he and Jan have moved to Robertsville, MO. Jan is staying with their son, Roy, at 3039 Shenandoah Lane, Robertsville, MO 63072 and Dean is at Victorian Place of Washington, 2701 Rabbit Trail Drive, Washington, MO 63090.
- Jerry Bemis—continued prayers
- Joe Hill—Rae Hill's husband with continued health concerns but he is home.
- Keith Milner—health concerns
- Ray & Carolyn West—health concerns
- Crystal Jennings—continued prayers as she deals with cancer and treatment
- Bonnie Tyler—health concern.
- Lisa Simmons—Linda Schwartz's daughter with health problems.
- Sandra & Richard Lopez—Bob Albrecht's sister & brother-in-law with health issues
- Jeff Weakley—ongoing health concern
- Loretta Dunphy—health concerns
- Marion Sanders—continued prayers for her health concerns.
- Bob & Shirley Albrecht—health concerns

- Mary Seyer—Brunstein's daughter with continued health concern.
- Zula—Don Beem's sister battling cancer
- All those serving in the armed forces; both domestic and international

Do you have a prayer concern you would like to share on our monthly newsletter? Just call the office, send an email to godfreyfirstumcoffice@gmail.com or write it on the back of your Sunday attendance card. The power of prayer is never-ending!

Our Prayers of Comfort and Sympathy go out to family and friends of...



~Drew Johnson who passed away—friend of Sue Ansell's and a neighbor growing up.

~Belinda Douglas who died July 21, after suffering a massive stroke. There will be no services. Belinda just recently helped at the Rummage Sale and also helped with some of the crafts for VBS. She is survived by her husband, David.

~Jennifer Norman Allman, who died July 18. She was the daughter of a friend of Barb Hammond's and suffered with pancreatic cancer for 4 years.

Dear Bible School Students of GFUMC:

Thank you so much for the wonderful food donation to help those in need. Your thoughtfulness will make a big difference in the lives of our families. We appreciate your efforts.

Board & Staff at Crisis Food Center



Offering

6/28/2026—7/26/2026

General Fund Offering

6-28	\$ 2,202
7-5	\$ 5,536
7-12	\$ 2,634
7-19	\$ 2,703
7-26	\$ 2,642
TOTAL	\$15,717

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,750

Monthly Total: \$ 20,467

Designated Offerings:

Preserving Our Future	\$ 150
Apportionments	\$ 120
Helping Hand	\$ 30
TOTAL	\$ 300

June income	\$ 24,395
June expenses	\$ 26,439
Year to date income	\$ 188,730
Year to date expenses	\$ 167,061
Net YTD Income	\$ 21,669

Attendance:

6-28	61
7-5	82
7-12	79
7-19	69
7-26	268
Monthly Total	559
Monthly Average	112
Yearly Average	102

CHIT CATTERS—LADIES ARE INVITED!!

All women are invited to a Salad Luncheon (bring a salad to share—lettuce, jello, pasta, fruit, vegetable, etc.) on Monday, August 17th at 11:00.

**Heads up that we will be discussing preparations for the Salad Bonanza to be held on Wednesday, September 16th. Each church group and/or any willing individual is asked to donate a themed basket of goodies for a Silent Auction. Please contact Linda Grames at 618-792-7709 if you have questions about the Silent Auction baskets.



Wild Bunch - Family Game Night

Our Friday night game get together is growing and you are most welcome to join us. We play any sort of game the group chooses. Recently Jane Hellrung taught us SWOOP, a card game easy to learn and lots of fun. The competition is friendly and learners are given special consideration. Feel free to bring your favorite and a snack to share. Hope to see you **Friday night August 7 at 6:00 p.m.** We meet in the coffee fellowship area where snacking is welcome. Hope to see some new faces! We look forward to seeing everyone and remember to **Walk In Love Daily.**



CRISIS FOOD CENTER

Keep in mind our goal of collecting 2026 items in the year 2026!! In July, we collected 433 canned good and non perishable items making our year to date total 1,774!! Yay!

This summer we are focusing on kid-friendly foods since school is out. Suggestions are: macaroni & cheese, Pop Tarts, canned spaghetti, peanut butter, jelly, granola bars, cereal, beans & franks, instant mashed potatoes, canned ravioli. Try to get cans with pop-tops if possible and thank you!



NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Witness) Committee

The NOW Committee continues to explore possible new projects as well as continue some of our "old favorites". The goal of collecting food for the Crisis Food Center continues to be a priority. We are supporting Ann McLaughlin and Joe Leonard in the Back to School projects. GriefShare will be offered starting August 26, led by Pastor Bill Pyatt. A Church Hymn Sing followed by an all-church Picnic is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 27. Watch for details next month!

We are gathering information about possibly providing some type of respite care for caregivers in our church family. We have also looked at the idea of doing some other study groups. As always, ideas & suggestions are always welcome. Our next meeting is August 17, at 10:30 am.



CARE TEAM –Two Opportunities!! August 4 & 19

Care team will meet on August 4 and August 19 at 10:00 in the Conference Room. We are blessed to have caring opportunities twice, early, and later in the month. We send all kinds of cards to church friends and others who need prayers, congratulations, happy thoughts, and other needs. By meeting twice, we can divide the list and take a little more time to write our messages. We welcome you at either or both times. When you are shopping, please remember we can use anniversary, sympathy, get well, encouragement, birthday, and thinking of you cards. Please know we appreciate everything you do to support this ministry.

Glenda Link



Let's Celebrate "Back-to-School"

It is hard to believe July is over! In just a few weeks, school bells will ring, buses will roll, and students will begin the 2026-27 school year.

As **A Church for the Community**, Godfrey First is committed to supporting local students, families, educators, and schools. This year, there are several meaningful ways you can help.

Backpacks for Students in Need

For many children, returning to school is an exciting time filled with anticipation - meeting a new teacher, reconnecting with friends, and beginning a fresh year. For others, however, it can bring worry and embarrassment because they do not have new clothes, shoes, or the supplies they need.

This year, the **NOW Committee**, **Godfrey Methodist Women's Group**, and **Children's Ministry team** are joining together to help local students begin the year with confidence.

Beginning **August 2**, backpacks and school-supply lists will be available at the back of the church. Please take a backpack home, purchase the items on the list, and return the filled backpack by **August 30 for the Backpack Blessing!** The backpacks will be distributed to students at three Godfrey elementary schools:

North Elementary

Lewis & Clark Elementary

Gilson Brown Elementary

Prefer not to shop? A **\$10 donation** is also welcome, and we will gladly purchase the supplies for you.

Filled backpacks are especially valuable for students who transfer schools during the year or whose families' budgets cannot cover these essential items. Thank you for helping local children start school feeling prepared and supported!

"When I Was a Kid..."

Each Sunday in August, a guest speaker will share a brief story about their school-day experiences. This was a favorite last year and brought back many wonderful memories!

Stories should be **five minutes or less** and may be shared on **August 9, 16, 23, or 30**. Please see **Ann McLaughlin** or **Joe Leonard** to participate. *If you are hesitant to stand in front of an audience, Joe can record your memories beforehand and show the video during church.

More Ways to Help Our Schools

Volunteer with ROAR

Local elementary schools need volunteers to listen to children read before school in the morning. This simple and enjoyable opportunity gives young students valuable reading practice with an attentive adult.

The program is called **ROAR - Reach Out and Read**. Please see **Ann McLaughlin** for more information.

Donate Classroom Essentials

The elementary schools also need **paper towels and facial tissues**. These everyday classroom supplies are used quickly and are always appreciated.

Support the Early Childhood Center

The Early Childhood Center on Godfrey Road is requesting:

Wipes

Pull-ups

New underwear for young children

These donations will help staff care for students who may still experience occasional accidents.



GPS Youth Ministry

Calling all Middle and High School Youth! GPS Youth Ministry starts on Sunday September 13. We have a gathering time at 5:30 p.m. when you can just hang out, have a snack, play games, or whatever. From 6:00-7:30 we have a group activity, introduction of a lesson topic, then split into small groups for discussion. You do not have to be a member of Godfrey First, or any church for that matter. We have several youth who are very active in their own churches, but choose to come to our youth group. We also have several youth who consider GPS their home church. There is no fee to join, and the lessons are designed to stand on their own each week so that people who have to miss every once in while won't miss a part of a series or fall behind. If you have any questions, please let me (Joe Leonard) know.



Ignite Youth Choir



One of the hardest days of the church year for us is the day of Ignite's last performance. On Sunday July 26, Ignite sang the final performance of Total Praise! It's been a very emotional and powerful summer of worshiping with hundreds of people in our area. We also said goodbye to our biggest senior class in our 12 year history with 10. These youth have blessed this ministry, GPS, us personally, and thousands of listeners over the last several years. Of the 10, 4 of them joined us during the 2019-2020 school year as 6th graders. To Hannah, Macie, Nathanael, Makayla, Josie, Wes, Rayfield, Marcus, Cowboy, and Kamora; THANK YOU. Thank you for being the awesome humans you are. Although you won't be with us each week on the risers, you've left your fingerprints on the group that will be remembered for years to come. Thank you for your leadership and friendship. You've been there for us through some of our biggest personal challenges. We can't thank you enough for your prayers, support, and love. We look forward to seeing what's in store for you in your next chapter, and we expect to see you at a performance or two (or 10) next summer!!

To the incoming seniors; You have so many gifts to offer and I can't wait to see you grow into leadership roles and help usher in the next era of Ignite. To our Ignite families; thank you as well. Your support for your kids and this ministry is beyond words. It takes a lot of time and dedication to be part of a group like this, and to make the wheels turn, and your help and support is appreciated more than you know. To our Godfrey First family; thank you for allowing us the time and space to do Ignite. I know being gone the whole summer is tough on worship, but know that we're doing what we're called to do: bring Christ to people. To my parents, who rarely miss a performance; thank you for being our biggest cheerleaders from day 1. The youth all recognize your love and support for this ministry and love seeing you there. I also don't know if I could direct without mom looking back at me and taking pictures of me! You guys set the example of what working in youth ministry should look like, and I am forever grateful. Finally, to Susan and Dood; thank you for keeping me as level headed as possible during the season. You know better than anyone how much I stress over this group, how much I work on making each program just right, and how much I pray that we're making a difference in their lives and in the world. You also know I take everything with this group personally because I'm so passionate about it. I say all the time that the kids joined because of Susan, but they tolerate me! Thank you for keeping us all on track.

Our 2026 season has now come to an end. In many ways, it was the best season of our 12 year history. There are still some things we can improve upon, and trust me, I'm already stressing over them! (haha!) Not a day goes by that I'm not singing one of the songs, working on a move, or wearing one of my dozens of Ignite shirts. We're already working on possible songs for next year. The impact this group has had on us personally cannot be measured, nor can its impact on the community. Each week they bring hope for the future, joy to the sad, and light to the darkness. I pray that 2027 will be at least as awesome as 2026 has been.

August 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30 JAM 9 am Worship 10 am <i>Backpack Blessing of donated backpacks</i>	31					1
2 Adult Sunday School & JAM 9 am Worship 10 am <i>Pick up a backpack to fill</i>	3	4 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Private Function 6:30 pm	5 Care Team 10 am	6 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	7 Game Night 6 pm	8
9 Adult Sunday School & JAM 9 am Worship 10 am <i>Back to school blessing—bring your own backpack</i>	10	11 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	12	13 Romans Bible Study 7 pm Alton Schools Begin Classes	14	15
16 Adult Sunday School & JAM 9 am Worship 10 am <i>Remember your favorite teacher</i>	17 NOW Committee Meeting 10:30 am Chit Chat Salad Luncheon 11 am	18 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	19 Care Team 10 am	20 Board of Trustees Meeting 6 pm Romans Bible Study 7 pm	21	22 Celebration of Life for Jetta Blair 10:30 am
23 JAM 9 am Worship 10 am <i>School Spirit Day</i>	24	25 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	26 Staff Meeting 10 am GriefShare 1:30 pm	27 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	28	29

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Our Vision:

***Bringing People to
Christ,
and Christ to People!***

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.

Back-to-School Month

August 2: Backpacks and school-supply lists will be available at the back of the church. Please take a backpack home, purchase the items on the list, and return the filled backpack by **August 30 for the Backpack Blessing!**

August 9: Back to School Blessing: Children and adults are invited to bring a backpack, briefcase, work bag, or other everyday bag to the 10 a.m. service.

Special JAM Activity: Children will enjoy a back-to-school lesson and craft at 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Hour: Special Back to School goodies!

August 16: Remember Our Favorite Teachers—write the name of your favorite teacher on our special white board!

August 23: School Spirit Day—wear your school colors or a shirt from your favorite school!

August 30: Backpack Blessing of all the filled backpacks returned!

First Day of School

The first day of school for Alton School District students is **August 13**

Together, we can help students throughout our community begin the new school year with confidence, dignity, and everything they need to succeed.



Rev. Bill and Brenda Pyatt will be leading a 13 week session of GriefShare program starting August 26. GriefShare is a grief recovery support group where you can find help and healing for the hurt of losing a loved one. They will meet on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. If you are interested in participating, or you know someone who is, please reach out to them at 618-301-7057.