

THE MESSENGER

February 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!*

It's chilly out there GFUMC! As the weather transitions to chillier, change is heating up the things going on at GFUMC! Before the announcement, I want to thank all those who participated in the State of the Church meeting we had on January 11th. As the moderator, y'all made it easy to run the meeting, so thank you very much. Also, thank you to the Church Council that made the setup for meeting easy to follow and effectively able to communicate to the church body why we were gathered. Now, on to a BIG announcement:

Beginning Sunday February 1, 2026, our church will move to one Sunday worship service each week at 10:00am. I'm very excited that the church came together and informed the Church Council what *they wanted moving forward, and I believe the Church Council discerned the will of not only the church but also the will of Christ for the Church, the bridegroom of Christ. There are more details about what this change means found further in The Messenger entitled "CHURCH COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT", I highly encourage you to give it a look. With the thanks and the announcements given, let's warm the cockles of our hearts by pouring over some scripture.*

From Jeremiah, chapter 29, verses 11 through 13: "I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. ¹² When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. ¹³ When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me." God here is addressing the Israelites and how God will aid them out of captivity, but I believe we can apply it more generally to what it means to trust God. What this verse

helps me with is that in the midst of a changing world, a changing church, and a changing life, God has it all in God's mind.

My mind cannot comprehend God's will, and I know the Israelites didn't understand why they were in exile. However, in the midst of what humanity can view as disaster, God is thinking about peace for us. When our current circumstances instill us with dread about what might be, we can have hope in a God led future. When our world weighs heavy, we call on you in prayer and You hear our prayers.

When God is doing a new thing, we have a unique opportunity: to search for God's will and way. But it's not something we do willy-nilly; it takes our whole heart. And as I reflect on God's call in my heart, I'm wondering what would happen if GFUMC's whole heart was searching for Christ. Where might Christ be found as we search for Him with our whole heart? I believe it will be where we least expect it. It could likely come from an unimagined and unlikely source. Our faith will just need to be open to hearing God's still small voice, not closed and only hearing the echoes of our own hubris and the din of the secular world. That's all from Pastor Jay this month. No matter where you are, always remember you can faithfully seek God, sit at the feet of Christ, and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Go forth to serve your God with patience and passion. Be deliberate in enacting your faith. Be steadfast in celebrating the Spirit's power. And may peace be your way in the world. Amen. (BOW, #559)

Shalom,
Pastor Jay

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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

- Keith Milner—has been hospitalized for continued health concern.
- Ken Beem—Don Beem's nephew with COPD.
- Deb Herzog's nephew, Chris, who died while out running.
- Jim Bailey has moved from his home to Longevity Living (formerly Cedarhurst) next door to church. The address there is 1000 Airport Road, Godfrey, and he is in room #229.
- David Morris—Lisa Holland's brother was released from the hospital in Anchorage, Alaska. Pray for his safety and ability to care for himself.
- Prayers for strength—sometimes making the right choice can still be painful.
- Bill Pyatt—continued prayers as he is having more tests.
- Jack—Bob & Elaine Weaver's grandson has had a viral infection since Christmas.
- Becky Whiteside—home from the hospital after a long bout with pneumonia.
- Jean Lacy—Missy Schonasky's mother is home from the hospital and doing better. It was determined she had a mini-stroke. Thank you for all the prayers.
- Prayers were heard—Jerry Leonard had a cancerous lesion removed and they were able to remove all of it. He is cancer free—thank you for prayers.
- David Osborn—hernia repair surgery on January 15.
- Art Grames—having a medical procedure at the end of January.
- Our church family.
- Sue Ansell has been dealing with laryngitis. She also had an arthrogram to check for torn ligaments in her wrist.
- Jeff Weakley—ongoing health concern
- Joe Hill—Rae Hill's husband with ongoing health concerns.
- Rob Hoffmann's sister, Jenny French—has a glioblastoma brain tumor and needs prayers. She has 4 children—2 in high school and 2 in college. Treatments have not been working.
- Loretta Dunphy—recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- Steve Warnock—recovering after hip replacement surgery
- Marion Sanders—continued prayers for her health concerns.
- Continued prayers for Jerry Bemis with ongoing health concerns.
- Bob & Shirley Albrecht—health concerns
- Mary Seyer—Brunstein's daughter with continued health concern.

- John Kennedy—continued prayers for healing.
- 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

godfreyfirststumcoffice@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...



~Dr. Richard O'Neill who passed away unexpectedly on Dec 26th. He was a very caring doctor and friend to Sue and Donnie Ansell.

~Carol Miller Palomino (*Dennis Hammond's cousin who died January 7 in Normal, IL*)

~Hazel Maag (*Tina Hoffmann's mother who died January 18*)



Congratulations to Chuck and Sierra Tucker on the birth of their first child, Hudson Henry! He was born Thursday, January 15, weighed 9 pounds and is 21.3" long! His proud grandparents are Doug & Danielle Bogert and great-grandparents, Bill & Sue Elwood! Welcome Hudson!! Blessings to the

SUNDAY MORNING STUDY

Connie Beyer and Glenda Link have started a new series, **Journey into God's Applause**, a 13-week study of the Life of David, a man after God's own heart. Books are available in the office or from Connie or Glenda. Donations are accepted. Please join them for review and discussion of these Bible-based lessons. Meeting time is 9:00 a.m.



Offering

1/4/2026—1/25/2026

General Fund Offering

1-4	\$ 4,240
1-11	\$ 8,425
1-18	\$12,171
1-25	\$ Snow
TOTAL	\$24,836

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,450

Monthly Total: \$ 29,286

Designated Offerings:

Apportionments	\$ 4,762
Bridging Our Future	\$ 6,950
Helping Hand Fund	\$ 30
TOTAL	\$11,742

December income	\$ 35,939
December expenses	\$ 33,705
Year to date income	\$ 309,078
Year to date expenses	\$ 358,886
Net YTD Income	\$ -49,808

Attendance:

1-4	100
1-11	104
1-18	106
1-25	Church Cancelled

Monthly Total 310

Monthly Average 103

Yearly Average 103



WILD BUNCH will meet on February 13 at 10:30. I don't know that cupid will be in attendance, but I am sure some love will be shared. We will share Valentine memories and perhaps a cupcake decorating tip. Please let Ellen or Glenda know if you plan to come so we have enough love to share. Hope to see you there!

Also, WILD BUNCH will hold a FAMILY GAME Night on February 27 at 6:30. Come and bring your favorite game to share. Ellen and I will bring some of our favorites, too. Of course, we will have some snacks. If you are tired of the same old BORING Friday night TV, come and join us. We look forward to sharing the fun!..



Dear Friends:

We are so grateful for your generosity and willingness to help by donating toys for our giveaway. Your kindness has made a meaningful and positive impact on a child's life this holiday season.

With gratitude,

*Volunteers and Staff of the
Community Hope Center*

Just wanted to send a note of thanks for the continued prayers and well wishes from our church community. These helped me through my healing process. I can finally say that I'm well on the road to recovery. I am most grateful for the kindness afforded David and me. We hope to see everyone at church soon.

Carol Gentry

Many thanks for the December donations of tuna, peanut butter and crackers for the Crisis Food Center! A total of 294 items were taken on Friday, January 10. The total included 45 peanut butter, 183 tuna and 64 crackers. What a blessing that will be to the CFC to help those in need. It's all put away now and will be waiting for us again in December 2026! Until then, the grocery cart is always in the entryway and available for your continued donations of non-perishable items! Thank you!!

NEW!!! CHIT CHAT HOUR

Trying something new for all women on Tuesday, February 17, at 10 a.m. The purpose of this gathering is to have fun getting to know each other. On our first time together, we will decide what we want to do in this group—will it be a craft, just talking, sharing recipes, solving the world's problems? We will decide together! Come and bring a friend! Contact Shirley Albrecht at 618-946-1821 or Jean Garrett at 618-960-1354!

GMM WILL CONTINUE

All men are invited to attend a reorganization meeting on February 14 at 8 a.m. The meeting will provide fellowship (WITH DONUTS) and decide on the plan going forward for future meeting days and time with a GMM focus of supporting the Trustees complete church maintenance projects. Men unable to work the projects will be encouraged to attend the future meetings to share in the fellowship.



CARE TEAM

Care Team will meet on February 4 at 10:00 to show concern and happiness for those in our church congregation needing CARE. We share get well prayers, thinking of you notes and birthday wishes. If this is something you CARE about, we look forward to seeing you. Consider this your special invitation!

Glenda Link



CRISIS FOOD CENTER

When you're doing your weekly shopping, pick up a couple extra items for the Crisis Food Center to fill our grocery cart in the entryway. We focus on non-perishable items to help those in need.



DOMINOES

We will not have Dominoes in February. Watch the Messenger for info regarding March!

MUSIC

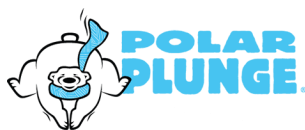


With our new one service on Sunday format, I want to assure you that I will do my best to make sure each service is a blended service with regard to music. The biggest advantage to having one service is that we'll benefit from having Cheri each Sunday instead of just 8:30 (or 9:30). For those who normally attend 8:30, you know how much the prelude, offering, and other pieces she plays add to the worship experience. For those who normally attend 10:45, you'll get to experience those pieces, in addition to improving our transitions from one element of worship to another. As far as congregational sing along songs, I will continue to do my best to match the music to Pastor Jay's message and to the liturgical season. Most Sundays will include praise music and hymns just as we have during combined worship the past few years.

The choir will be starting back up soon in preparation of Easter. Please look for more information in the coming weeks.

GPS YOUTH MINISTRY

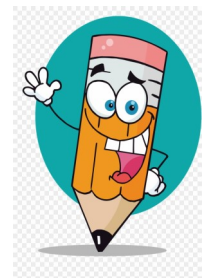
We continue to have 35-40 kids each week during GPS. After taking a couple of weeks off for Christmas, we got back into the swing with Talking Points conversation starters for a couple of weeks. We then had a discussion on how God intentionally and strategically created each of us for a purpose. We completed a spiritual gifts inventory to help steer our youth, especially our older high schoolers getting ready to move on, into the direction God intended.



Our next big event is the Polar Plunge!! Once again, we will jump into a pool of water at church to raise money for Special Olympics-Southern Illinois Region J. Our plunge is scheduled for February 28 at 10:00 am. Look for opportunities to help donate coming soon.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The JAM lessons this month have focused on Psalm 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God!" The students are learning that no matter what, God is in Charge. God is our safe place. We can trust that God will help us in times of trouble. We have had a fun time demonstrating this idea with dominoes and shaving cream! Yes, shaving cream to tell the story of how God helped the Israelites escape from the Egyptians with the parting of the water.



In keeping with the idea of providing "anchor" events at our church (four events throughout the year, held to invite the children in our community to continue coming to Godfrey First). I am currently "hatching" an idea for an "Eggstra" Special Easter Craft Party and Egg Hunt. Much like the Fall-O-Ween Fun Fest families would come into our church and visit different stations to make Easter crafts. They could also dye Easter eggs, take a picture with the Easter Bunny, possibly see a live rabbit, do the Bunny Hop dance, etc.... This inside time would last about an hour and then we would go outside for an egg hunt. I would appreciate any feedback you might have on this idea.

Plans are also in the works for Vacation Bible School 2026. Get ready to explore the nature of God at Rainforest Falls, June 14 - 18.

Children in kindergarten through 5th grade are welcome to attend JAM at the new time of 9 a.m. each Sunday, starting February 1!!

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN ANNOUNCEMENT

When I was young, most businesses were closed on Sundays and church attendance took priority over jogging or golfing. In fact, I remember waiting in the narthex of our church to be “ushered” to our seats and if you arrived late, you were “ushered” to the front pew of shame. Maybe that is why people still avoid the front row.

Do you know why churches centuries ago had tall steeples and spires? It was so they could be seen miles away. The sight would lead weary travelers and those in need to a place they knew they could find help and hope. Churches built today rarely have a steeple. That type of advertising is no longer needed.

Our communities were smaller, more intimate and church members felt more like extended family. Folk used their church as a social outlet. Men gathered to do what they do best and the women gathered to do what they do best, all in the service of our Lord. But all of that is in the past. Times change, society changes, and along with that, the needs of humanity change as well. UMW (United Methodist Women) chapters across the country have been folding. Ours was one of the most active ones left. For the past eighteen months, the Godfrey Methodist Women have reached out multiple times asking for people to volunteer in leadership. No one came forward. This situation was discussed among the active members in November and a vote was taken to dissolve the organization. When the vote was announced at the Church Council meeting, some members were concerned if this was a sign the church is in trouble.

I choose not to believe that. Maybe instead God is saying it is time for smaller groups to spearhead specific activities and mission work. Short-term commitments rather than long term. Maybe there is no longer any need for separate men’s and women’s meetings. We’ve all been working together now for years; in the gardens, during bigger events, dinners and more. So, our many caring and social activities will be taken up by groups like the Care Team, NOW and the Wild Bunch. Major fundraisers for missions will continue under the organization of smaller committees who will manage the event and reach out to the entire church for volunteer workers.

In closing, change is inevitable, but what does not change is God and His eternal plan for His people. How we serve the Lord may change, but His call for us to serve never will. He is still seeking fresh leadership. Younger minds, fresh ideas and renewed enthusiasm is critical in continuing the work God has for our church in this community. Whether or not we can put it into words, we are all aware that something is happening; something is different. God is calling His people to trust Him, listen for his call and step up to lead in implementing the changes and growth he has planned for us all.



RUMMAGE SALE INFO

There will be a Rummage Sale meeting on Tuesday, February 10, at 6:30 p.m. If you have anything to do with the Rummage Sale or WOULD LIKE to have something to do with the Rummage Sale, have questions, concerns, etc., please come and we will discuss what is on your mind. Men AND women are welcome!

The Rummage Sale will be held on Friday and Saturday, April 24 & 25. We will need help setting up all that week! Mark your calendars now so you can spend some quality time with your church family! It's a great week of getting to know each other and have fun working together!

It's not too early to start cleaning those closets and the basement and make a pile of your donations. We won't be taking those donations until the week of the sale, but hopefully you have a corner in your house that you can keep contributing to until the sale! Start getting ready! It will be here before you know it!!





2026 Community Lenten Services Schedule

Sponsored by Alton Area Church Women United

Ash Wednesday – February 18: Main St. United Methodist Church 1400 Main St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Don Sanford (Greater St. James MBC)

Wednesday – February 25: Unity Fellowship Church 1301 West Delmar Godfrey, IL

Speaker: Minister Ruby Madison (Open Door Fellowship Church)

Wednesday – March 4: Tabernacle MBC 2621 Amelia St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Nick Gleason (Main St. United Methodist Church)

Wednesday – March 11: Greater St. James MBC 2016 Belle St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Ian Caveny (First Presbyterian Church)

Wednesday – March 18: Open Door Fellowship Church 929 Milnor St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Michael Porter (Millennium Temple COGIC)

Wednesday – March 25: First Presbyterian Church 4th & Alby St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor John Buford (Tabernacle MBC)

Wednesday – April 1: Morning Star MBC 1 East 6th St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Gregory Harrison (Deliverance Temple COGIC)

Good Friday – April 3: Deliverance Temple COGIC 1125 East 6th St. Alton, IL

Speaker: Pastor Charles Burton (Unity Fellowship Church)

Lenten Services start at 12:00 noon and last 30 minutes. A free-will offering will be collected. The offering will be split between two charities (Crisis Food Center and Oasis Women Center). Lunch will also be served at a cost of \$5.00 which includes soup, sandwich, dessert, and a drink. Please plan to attend.

February 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Private Function 1-5 pm No GPS	2	3 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am WILD Bunch 10:30 am GRCS 6:30 pm	4 Care Team 10 am	5	6 NO Dominoes	7 Private Function 10 am
8 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am GPS Youth Su- per Bowl Party 5 pm	9	10 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Chit Chat Hour 10 am GRCS 6:30 pm Rummage Sale Meeting 6:30 pm	11	12 Little Knights Staff Meeting 6 pm Romans Bible Study 7 pm	13 NOW Commit- tee Meeting 10:30 am	14 Godfrey Method- ist Men 8 am
15 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite Starts 3 pm GPS Youth 5 pm	16	17 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Chit Chat Hour 10 am GRCS 6:30 pm	18	19	20	21 Little Knights Staff Meeting 9 am
22 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5 pm	23	24 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm	25	26 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	27 WILD Bunch 6:30 pm	28 Polar Plunge 10 am



Happy Valentines Day

Godfrey First United Methodist Church

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Vision:

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

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.

CHURCH COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

On behalf of the Church Council, we would like to share an important update with our congregation. Beginning February 1, 2026, our church will move to one Sunday worship service each week at 10:00 a.m.

We will continue to offer Sunday School and JAM at 9:00 a.m. providing meaningful opportunities for learning and fellowship before worship.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in our State of the Church meeting on January 11. Your thoughtful questions, shared insights, and faithful prayers were invaluable as we discerned this next step together.

We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to worshipping and growing together as one church family.



IGNITE YOUTH CHOIR

Ignite's 12th season will begin on Sunday February 15 with an information meeting at 3:00, followed by rehearsal until 5:30. Ignite is open to all middle and high school youth regardless of church affiliation or where they are in their faith journey. Our first performance is set for May 17 at 6:00.



SOUPER/SOAPER BOWL

It's that time of year again when we root for our favorite team to make it to the Super Bowl! We show our support by donating items to the Crisis Food Center. If you are rooting for an AFC team, you are asked to bring canned soup or food. If you're rooting for an NFC team, you are asked to bring soap or other personal hygiene items. If you have no rooting interest, you are asked to bring whatever you feel led to bring!!

This is a fun way to support a great organization. Super Bowl Sunday, February 8, is the last day to contribute!

