

THE MESSENGER

January 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!*

Happy New Year GFUMC!
First, **THANK YOU TO ALL FOR MY
WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS GIFT!**

I greatly appreciate it more than you could ever know. Second, **announcements!**

As we have done for a year now, **Sunday, January 4th** (the first Sunday of the month) **will be a combined 9:30 a.m. service with communion.** Also, on **Sunday, January 11**, we will have a **special combined worship service at 9:30 followed by a State of the Church meeting at which time a summary of the Leadership Summit will be given** (the Leadership Summit will be January 9th & 10th). **There will also be a time for questions and comments. We ask that prayers are given for our church as we venture into a new year full of new and exciting opportunities.**

Speaking of the New Year, let's bring it in with a focus on Jesus. Jesus fulfills the promise made by God through the prophet Isaiah, "Look! I'm doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it? I'm making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness." (Isaiah 43:19, CEB) In this season of rising secularism, a push to ideological extremes, and dividing upon human beliefs rather than uniting in Christ, you may be asking yourself: *where is Christ doing a new thing?*

I see new "ways" (I'll call them inroads) with the GPS Youth Group and Ignite. Joe and Susan are creating an environment (in both ministries) where all can come to the feet of Christ, ask questions, and receive answers concerning their journey to being young adult Christians. I see new inroads with the young adults I socialize with while we geeking-out and talk theology. The tricky part of all that is

it can be hard to see; we may not recognize it. It doesn't directly translate to folk in pews (however, there are young adults and youth coming to church), but it does mean these young adults and youth are calling GFUMC their "church" or their "safe place" to learn about Jesus's ways.

But I'm only one part of the Body of Christ in movement here at GFUMC. Maybe there are other parts of the Body of Christ here that are excited because they see the new things Jesus is doing, and want to be on those ways as Christ carves them through wilderness. One of the things that makes us blind to the new things Christ is doing is that we can be busy focused on the desert and the wilderness. "I only like X," "I'm only for Y," "I only listen to Z." When our gaze is fixed on the problem and fixed upon the current circumstances of the problem, we can miss that Christ is calling us to the new way.

Instead, let's pray like this, "Jesus, I only have eyes for Your loving ways. Open my eyes to Your newly planted sprouts, that I may join my voice to Yours and be united in Christ Jesus, Amen."

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

- Hazel Maag — Tina Hoffmann’s mother has been put on hospice care.
- Carol Palomino — Dennis Hammond’s cousin in Normal, IL, has been put on hospice care at her home.
- Susie Lowe has asked for prayers for Goldie Wirth who had surgery to remove a tumor in abdomen that went well.
- Susie also asked for prayers for Craig Campbell who started radiation to treat glioblastoma.
- Norman Matsche—John Harding’s father-in-law is now in a nursing home.
- A friend of Cheri Trusty’s who is in hospice care—also prayer for his caregiver.
- Prayers for the Crisis Food Center that they receive the necessary resources to serve our most vulnerable community members.
- Mark Miller — Jan (VanMeter) Miller’s husband with health issues—they live in Wisconsin.
- Prayers for family & friends of Leyla (Knight’s foreign exchange student). Her family is in Switzerland.
- Bonnie Tyler—resident at Asbury’s Weston Terrace who was transferred to San Gabriel last week—difficult on the family.
- Family of Rick Boyer—friend of Ansell’s who died December 4.
- Prayers for Sue Ansell’s husband, Donnie, who has some health concerns.
- Thanks to those who brought such Christmas beauty to our church.
- Prayers for a friend who lost her husband, Tom.
- Prayers for Peggy Bolles with a double hernia—submitted by Cheri Trusty.
- Renae White’s niece, Bronte Fencel, is engaged to Jean & Cal Garret’s grandson, Cole Lawson.
- David Morris—Lisa Holland’s brother was found in his house in Alaska with no heat, barely alive with severe frostbite. He is hospitalized. Has no family in Alaska. Lisa was going to Alaska to look after him.
- Prayers for a friend who lost her mother.
- Joe Hill—Rae Hill’s husband—continued prayers for health concern.
- Carol Gentry—regaining strength after heart surgery.
- Terri Lane—Brenda Pyatt’s sister in Auburn, IN, with health issues.
- Rob Hoffmann’s sister, Jenny French—continued health concern
- Loretta Dunphy—recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- Marion Sanders—continued prayers for her health concerns.
- Keith Milner—continued 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 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...

~Dorothy Bailey who died December 8. Her husband, Jim survives.

~The office has received word that John Weller died December 7 at the age of 80. John was the pastor at Godfrey 1st UMC from 1986-1991.

~Family & friends of Susan Webb, who passed away December 21 in Lincoln, IL, with siblings David, Carol and Jeanie by her side. The Webb children grew up in the church and their parents were active in the two church buildings on Grace Street. Rev. Bill Pyatt officiated at the funeral.



Offering

11/30/25—1/28/25

General Fund Offering

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 11-30 | \$ 1,428 |
| 12-7 | \$ 5,415 |
| 12-14 | \$ 13,463 |
| 12-21 | \$ 4,643 |
| 12-28 | \$ 8,030 |
| TOTAL | \$32,979 |

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,200

Monthly Total: \$ 37,179

Designated Offerings:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Bridging Our Future | \$ 533 |
| Helping Hand Fund | \$ 25 |
| TOTAL | \$ 558 |

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| November income | \$ 23,106 |
| November expenses | \$ 31,790 |
| Year to date income | \$ 271,711 |
| Year to date expenses | \$ 325,840 |
| Net YTD Income | \$ -54,129 |



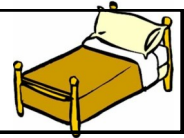
Let's make a snowman without freezing our hands, **Friday January 9 at 10:30**. Join us for a fun hour (??) of crafting to share with others. **All are welcome!**

WILD BUNCH #2 Yes, two opportunities in January to Walk in Love Daily! Our own, Linda Bemis, will be helping us make Valentines on Tuesday, January 27 at 10:30. Sure to be fun. We will share these with those unable to get to church regularly. Valentine making never gets old. Come join us as we share God's love with others. Questions, call Glenda 618 466-4895.

SUNDAY MORNING STUDY

On Sunday, January 11 at 8:30 a.m. Connie and Glenda will begin to share a new series, **Journey into God's Applause**, a 13-week study of the Life of David, a man after God's own heart. Lesson titles include How to be used by God, Dealing with Difficult People, Defeating Depression, Avoiding Sin, and others. Books are available in the office. Donations are accepted. Please join them for review and discussion of these Bible-based lessons. After January 11, we will meet at 9:30 a.m. but the first Sunday of the month will be at 8:30 a.m.

If you happen to need a twin size bed, Bob & Susie Lowe have one that's looking for a good home! If interested, please call Susie at 618-610-6325.



Attendance:

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 11-30 | 22/58 |
| 12-7 | 102 |
| 12-14 | 124 |
| 12-21 | 119 |
| 12-28 | 71 |
| Monthly Total | 496 |
| Monthly Average | 99 |
| Yearly Average | 99 |

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



HOLY HIKING BOOTS

Holy Hiking Boots had a beautiful day for our Christmas party hike. We hiked up the hill at Pere Marquette State Park to the Twin Shelter and were greeted by Oliver Hoffmann playing Christmas music on his violin and hot chocolate. We enjoyed treats and sang Christmas carols, it was amazing! Huge thank you to everyone who came out and all of those who support this crazy ministry with their attendance! I am not scheduling a hike for January because of the risk of ice.

Tina Hoffmann



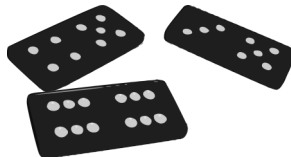
CARE TEAM

Care Team will meet on **Wednesday, January 7** at 10:00 to share concerns and well wishes with those in need. Make time this month to warm the heart of others. Hope to see you.



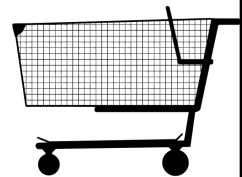
DOMINOES

We will not have Dominoes in January or February. Just taking precautions before the weather makes those decisions for us! Stay warm!



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.



JANUARY WORSHIP

From the Church Council concerning Worship in January and "State of the Church" meeting. As we have done for all of 2025, **January 4, 2026** (the first Sunday of January) will be a combined worship service at 9:30 a.m. with blended worship style, choir, and communion. The Church Council will also be holding its annual Leadership Summit on **January 9-10, 2026** in which we set the goals, vision, and mission for the ministries of GFUMC. With this, on **January 11, 2026, we will be having another combined worship service at 9:30 a.m.** such that the Church Council can host at **10:30 a.m. a State of the Church forum.** Pastor Jay and representatives from Church Council, SPRC, Trustees, and Finance will give a report of each administrative ministry and take questions after these reports are given. Please submit questions in writing in advance if possible to the any of the following:

Shannon Knight, Church Council Chair knight.shannon@gmail.com

Pastor Jay revjayhanscom@gmail.com,

Barb godfreyfirstumcoffice@gmail.com,

Susan Leonard, Church Council recording secretary leonardfam6@gmail.com

We hope to see you there!

AGENDA for January 11th, Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

- 1.) Presentation by Church Council Ministries on their ministry's goals for 2026.
- 2.) SPRC/Trustees/Finance presentations for a State of the Church.
- 3.) Church Council Presentation on 2026 goals and consensus gathering on 4 potential options for Sunday Worship schedule that Church Council is garnering opinions on:
 - a. Continue 1st Sundays combined worship and combined worship July and December.
 - b. Forge a new path of combined worship for all services.
 - c. Back to 5th Sundays combined worship and combined worship July and December.
 - d. Back to 2 services every Sunday.
- 4.) Q&A for Church Council (please submit questions in advance if able).

Ring in the New Year

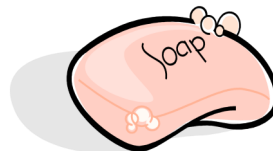
This year, the children of our church were able to experience Advent in a special and meaningful way. With the help of Dorothy Ebbeler, Glenda Link, Ellen Bogard, and several others, the children received "red" bags each week filled with small gifts, treats, coloring sheets, and activity pages. A heartfelt thank you goes to Missy Schonasky for caring for the children while I attended worship. We also joyfully celebrated the birth of Jesus with a birthday party on December 21, complete with cupcakes and goodie bags for all the children. After a busy and cheerful Christmas season, JAM will resume on January 18. January's JAM lessons will focus on the angels sharing the Good News of Christ's birth and the arrival of the Wise Men.



Ann McLaughlin, Children's Ministry

NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Worship) COMMITTEE

NOW Committee invites you to participate once again in the "Souper Soaper Bowl Challenge" donations to celebrate the Super Bowl on February 8. Drop off your donations at a display in the lobby beginning on Sunday January 18. Vote with your donations for your favorite team. Predict the winner and final game score and win a prize!



GPS YOUTH MINISTRY



GPS will get back together for the second semester on Sunday January 4 with our favorite topic; Talking Points. We ask random questions about no particular topic. Some questions are as simple as "what's your favorite pizza topping", while some are deeper such as "how do you respond when someone tells you they don't believe in God." That second question will lead us into a very challenging spring agenda of topics. We are going to address DOUBT for much of the spring. Some of the resources I'm using are "Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say", "Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes", "The Bible Doesn't Say That; 40 Biblical Mistranslations, Misconceptions, and Other Misunderstandings", "The Bible Says So: What We Get Right (and Wrong) About Scripture's Most Controversial Issues", and "Stupid Stuff Heard in Church". We will talk about how doubt is a normal human experience and how, through God's grace, it can help us grow in our relationship with Christ as Peter and Thomas did. Be on the lookout for more things from GPS this spring!!

MUSIC MINISTRY

I want to thank everyone who participated in our Christmas Family Choir for our program/service on December 14. It was a lot of fun and I hope you join us next time. With that said, with Christmas now in the rear view mirror, our focus will switch to Easter!! Easter is April 5, so we will have something planned on, and around, that day.



IGNITE YOUTH CHOIR



Mark your calendars for the start of Ignite, Season 12!! The Ignite Youth Choir will have their first rehearsal on Sunday, February 15 at 3:30. Ignite is open to all middle and high school youth regardless of where they are in their faith journey. I have a big program planned that will include different styles of songs that are normally found in worship. We had 43 youth last year and most have indicated that they are returning! If you know anyone who might be interested, have them contact Joe Leonard (618) 973-2244 or have them come on February 15!

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Starting January 1, the resurrected Worship Committee will be making sure key roles are filled for Sunday morning worship. On the Welcome Center in the entryway are sign up sheets for greeters, communion stewards (preparers) and communion servers, coffee hour refreshments, head usher, and more. Members of the Worship Committee will be making sure those slots are full for Sunday morning to help make sure our worship experience goes as smoothly as possible. Please consider signing up.



January 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|---|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Office Closed | 2 <u>NO Dominoes</u> | 3 |
| 4 Combined Wor- ship Service 9:30 GPS Youth 5:30 | 5 | 6 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Staff Meeting 10 am GRCS 6:30 pm | 7 Care Team 10:30 am | 8 Romans Bible Study 7 pm | 9 NOW Commit- tee Meeting 10:30 am WILD Bunch 10:30 am Church Council Summit 6 pm | 10 Church Council Summit |
| 11 Journey Study 8:30 am Combined Wor- ship Service 9:30 All Church Meet- ing 10:30 am GPS Youth 5:30 | 12 | 13 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Staff Meeting 10 am GRCS 6:30 pm | 14 | 15 Church Council Meeting 6 pm | 16 | 17 |
| 18 Early Worship 8:30 am Journey Study 9:30 am Connect Worship & JAM 10:45 am GPS Youth 5:30 | 19 | 20 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm | 21 | 22 Romans Bible Study 7 pm | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Early Worship 8:30 am Journey Study 9:30 am Connect Worship & JAM 10:45 am GPS Youth 5:30 | 26 | 27 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am WILD Bunch 10:30 am GRCS 6:30 pm | 28 | 29 Romans Bible Study 7 pm | 30 | 31 |

*Godfrey First United
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Vision:

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

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.

GODFREY FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**STATE OF
THE CHURCH**

& CHURCH MEETING

JAN 11 **COMBINED WORSHIP 9:30**
CHURCH MEETING 10:30

AGENDA (see article inside (pg. 4) for more information)

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