

THE MESSENGER

July 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!*

"That's not fair." You may think that's a line from one of my children concerning cookie distribution (which, though true, is not the focus of this Newsletter Article), but it's been a line coming up for me consistently over the past few weeks, mostly from unexpected and what should be unserious places. But they've led me to considering the Good News that fairness by God has been attested to many times in the Bible. The most succinct version comes from St. Paul in Romans chapter 2, verse 11 (this is the CEB version), "¹¹ God does not have favorites."

What I like about this translation is it shows how God is very different than we can be at times. In my unserious places in discussing what is fair, a common theme has been coming out: "I do this, so I need more," or in the negative, "They don't do this, so they need less." But that's the thing about God here that I love in how different we think; it's not about *what we do*, it's about *what God has already done for us*. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, when the younger son asks for the property to be split, the father does it without fuss or muss. We at times don't think like that, we start gamifying who deserves what (the eldest son towards the end of the parable brings up this point). But the father's response to the eldest son in Luke 15:31 of, "^{31b} ...you are always with me, and everything I have is yours," reminds us that we may struggle with meting out justice fairly, God's grace, the sending of the Son, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit has already made us a favored child of God. We receive all and more than we could ever need from God... let's mimic that and not judge who gets more or less, but instead give as God would give without favor.

Also in my unserious places, I've been struggling with "compromise" covering for selfishness. In a world where we can either be for God or against God, don't give God a lukewarm response. When Jesus is giving word to the various early churches in Revelation, He tells the church

in Laodicea, in 3:15, "¹⁵ I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot."

Here, Christ is admonishing lukewarm spiritual life; either be cold that the fires of the Holy Spirit may consume you, to be on fire for all that God has, is, and will do for you. Sometimes though, we play games to hide our hypocrisies. "I can do so much... but I'll do just enough," "They deserve God's love... but they aren't the right type of folk," "I deserve more... but I'll compromise so everyone loses." Selfishness hinders us from surrender to God's impartial love. Don't just rest on your laurels, instead do good. Don't judge lest you be judged, instead do no harm. And don't use compromise to cover your own selfishness, instead be truly selfless by staying in love with God. By the way, do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God are John Wesley's 3 simple rules.

Overall, we may not know the best way to be fair... but just like cookies not getting to the right places according to our will or friends being selfish when selflessness is called for, we have Good News from God, though we may not know impartiality, "¹¹ God does not have favorites." You are beloved child of God, and so are our neighbors, so let's go forth mimicking the mind of God rather than sticking to our own misguided egos.

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

- Marcie Ebbeler—was hospitalized due to seizures and pneumonia—is home now on IV antibiotics.
- Marcy Reed—Al & Pat Reed’s daughter diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Ann McLaughlin—recovery going well with her broken collar bone and the sling is off!
- Don Long, Sr.—health concern
- Todd Witt—health concern
- Prayers for Frances Boren’s nephew who was diagnosed with bladder cancer.
- Cheri Becca, Marjorie Wheeler’s niece, who had surgery on her “good” eye.
- Prayer for LaDon, who has begun a clinical trial for a new chemo regimen—submitted by Cheri Trusty.
- Kim Thompson—friend of Linda Grames needs prayers for a good diagnosis—pray it’s not cancer.
- Steve Schwartz—recovering after having a pacemaker and also a broken foot.
- 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 as he does rehab after a stroke.
- Bill Pyatt—doing very well following surgery in April.
- Pam Sevier—continued prayer after heart surgery.
- 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...



~Jetta Blair who died June 17, at the age of 98. She was an active member of Godfrey First for 68 years. She lived in Missouri the last several years but still kept in touch and faithfully read her newsletter to keep up with what was going on. A Celebration of Life will be held later this summer. Rest in peace, Jetta.

~Adam Range—son of a friend of Linda Schwartz who died June 21.

~Sandra Cooksey who died this month in Missouri. She was a member at GFUMC but had moved recently from Asbury Village to be closer to family.

HAPPY
Birthday
America!



Offering

5/31/2026—6/21/2026

General Fund Offering

5-31	\$ 3,224
6-7	\$ 3,506
6-14	\$ 5,720
6-21	\$ 2,461
TOTAL	\$14,911

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,550

Monthly Total: \$ 19,461

Designated Offerings:

Crisis Food Center	\$ 44
Apportionments	\$ 100
Helping Hand	\$ 30
TOTAL	\$ 174

May income	\$ 26,975
May expenses	\$ 26,345
Year to date income	\$ 164,335
Year to date expenses	\$ 140,622
Net YTD Income	\$ 23,713

Attendance:

5-31	72
6-7	87
6-14	76
6-21	77
Monthly Total	312
Monthly Average	78
Yearly Average	101

CHIT CHATTERS

The Chit Chatters will meet on Monday, July 20, at 10 a.m. Bring a craft or something to work on. Let's see what everyone is doing! We will also begin discussion on the September Salad Bonanza.

Thanks to Carole Baker for opening up her home and gardens to us in June. Everything was absolutely beautiful!!



GODFREY METHODIST MEN

Based on summer vacations, the Godfrey Methodist Men's group will not meet this summer. The next meeting will be in September.



Dear Godfrey First UMC,

Thank you so much for the wonderful food donation. As our client numbers continue to grow, we are so grateful for your support. We truly appreciate your help

Board & Staff of Crisis Food Center

Jerry and I would like to thank all of our Godfrey 1st family for their kind words, thoughts, cards and most importantly their prayers. Jerry had another stroke in April of this year that was especially damaging. He lost his ability to speak and has some lingering physical weakness. Fortunately, he is beginning to recover from some of those problems through therapies. This is only possible through God's blessings. We are exceedingly grateful for each and every one of you.

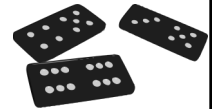
Jerry & Linda Bemis



Wild Bunch - Family Game Night



Our next game night will be on July 10 (moving from July 3 which is fireworks night) at 6:00p.m. Bring a snack, bring a game or play one that is provided.



Enjoy the fellowship and the friendly competitive spirit shared by all. Our game night will always be the first

Friday of every month, so put it on your calendar. We look forward to seeing everyone and remember to **W**alk **I**n **L**ove **D**aily.

CRISIS FOOD CENTER

Keep in mind our goal of collecting 2026 items in the year 2026!! So far in June, we have collected 167 canned good and non perishable items!! Yay! We also collected an additional 295 items during VBS! That's 462 items this month? Can we hit 500? 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!



CARE TEAM

Care Team will be meeting July 1 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room. If you would like to share some encouraging words for our church family and others, please join us. There is plenty of room and no experience necessary! See you there.



HOLY HIKING BOOTS

We will not have any hikes in July because Tina doesn't have any free dates due to vacation and her boys' schedules! We will let you know when we have the next date set!



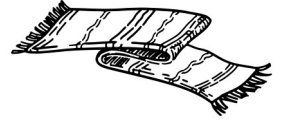
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) is taking off the month of July. Miss Ann will see you again in August!



The Rummage Sale Committee would like to thank everyone for a successful Rummage Sale this year! Our grand total was \$7,614.44 and this is a final total!! We have selected nine local missions for distribution of funds. Next year's sale is set for April 9 & 10, so Save the Date and we'll see you then!!

SHAWL MINISTRY

With summer coming, heat and humidity are a definite possibility. It also means the air-conditioning will be running during worship. For those who feel discomfort when the chilled air is blowing, there are shawls available in the basket at the rear of the sanctuary for use during worship. You may leave them on your seat and they will be collected after the service is finished. Thanks to Sherry Simcox who suggested this ministry!



Rainforest Falls VBS: Wrapping Up the Adventure!

What an amazing week we had at Rainforest Falls VBS! Forty-one children gathered each evening to discover the Nature of God through Bible stories, hands-on activities, music, games, and fellowship.

Throughout the week, the children learned five important truths: God is our Creator, God knows everything, God is our safe place, God is love, and God is forever. What an incredible foundation for young hearts and minds!

Each evening was filled with exciting Bible lessons, Scripture memory, fascinating science explorations, and plenty of "wild" games. We also enjoyed a delicious supper together, which was appreciated by many of the children, families, and volunteers. While some may see Vacation Bible School as a time-consuming or expensive one-week event, we know it is so much more. VBS is a stepping stone for lifelong faith. It introduces children to Jesus, strengthens the connection between home and church, builds lasting friendships, and encourages discipleship that continues throughout the year.

The "Gigi" in me has to say, Amen! This was the first year my grandsons were old enough to attend VBS, and they had an absolute blast. They especially loved their little Bible Buddies—the plastic rainforest animals with Bible verses printed on the bottom—and enjoyed making new friends. Most importantly, I'm fairly certain this was the first time they had ever heard about God. What a wonderful beginning! Now they have a foundation for conversations at home as they ask questions and learn more about God's love. I'm sure many other children experienced those same "firsts" during VBS, and that's what makes this ministry so meaningful.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time, donated supplies, prepared meals, prayed, and supported Rainforest Falls VBS. Your faithfulness helped plant seeds that God will continue to grow in the hearts of these children for years to come.



GRIEF SHARE

We have discussed offering another 13 sessions of Grief Share for our church family members and any in our community who are dealing with the loss of a loved one. One option is to offer it on Wednesdays beginning August 19 and conclude on November 11. We want your feedback if you would prefer to attend on Wednesday afternoons (2:00-3:30 pm) or evenings (6:30-8:00 pm). Sessions would be led by Bill and Brenda Pyatt and a few volunteers. Please share your feedback with Bill (618-301-7057) or leave a message with Barb at the church office. We would need your feedback by Sunday, July 12.



JOURNEY TO A COURAGEOUS CALLING

Glenda Link and Connie Beyer will begin a 7-week study by Jeremy C. Hagle on Sunday, July 5, at 9 a.m., called *Journey to a Courageous Calling*. It's a study of Jonah and Nahum, comparing the two prophets and the messages they preached. Along the way, we get to know the Lord God in a deeper way. Join us in the Youth Room in the Education Wing for this study on Sundays!



July 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Care Team 10 am	2 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	3 July 4th ob- served Office Closed	4 Independence Day
5 Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite at Up- per Alton Baptist 10:30 am	6	7 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Private Function 6:30 pm	8	9 Church Council 6 pm	10 Game Night 6 pm	11
12 Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite at Elsayh 8:30 am, Hartford UMC at 11:15 am	13 NOW Committee Meeting 10:30 am	14 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am	15	16 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	17	18
19 Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am	20	21 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am	22	23 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	24	25
26 Adult Sunday School 9 am Ignite will be our Worship Service at 10 am	27	28 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am	29	30 Little Knights Graduation 6 pm Romans Bible Study 7 pm	31	

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Vision:

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

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.



THERE IS STILL TIME TO CATCH
IGNITE BEFORE OUR FINAL
PERFORMANCE AT GFUMC ON 7/26

2026 REMAINING PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

JULY 5	UPPER ALTON BAPTIST	10:30AM
JULY 8	ASBURY VILLAGE	10:30AM 1:00PM
JULY 12	ELSAH UMC	8:30AM
JULY 12	HARTFORD UMC	11:15AM
JULY 12	JERSEY COUNTY FAIR	6:00PM
JULY 16-19	BRANSON, KIMBERLING CITY METHODIST	VARIOUS
JULY 26	GODFREY FIRST UMC	10:00AM

TAKE YOUR FLAME **IGNITE** THE WORLD



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