

THE MESSENGER

March 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!*

Hello Godfrey First United Methodist Church! As the weather decides if it's wintery or springy, we come to a busy season of preparing for the Rummage Sale, Holy Week, and family traveling for Easter. But right now, we can take a moment to not focus on the busy, and instead focus on our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let's do that, with a focus on what Lent means to us as Christians.

Let's focus in on our journey through Lent by hearing from the prophet Joel in chapter 2, verses 12-13, "12 Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow; 13 tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive." Let's pray: "*Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way of peace. Come into the brokenness of our lives and our land with your healing love. Help us to be willing to bow before you in true repentance, and to bow to one another in real forgiveness. Amen*" (UMC BOW #482)

My very first memory that I have is a warm spring day in Maine, lazing on the couch atop my mother. The window was open in our Appalachian trailer and my twin brothers were also covering Mom as we were watching whatever was on TV in the late 1980s. Then, all of the sudden, Mom stated, "Oh! I hear Dad, let's get him!" and me and the twins scrambled off mom to the floor, rushed the door just as Dad opened it, and with joy greeted him and he reciprocated that joy. That's all I remember, I must have been no older than 3-4, but it still sticks with me to this day. The joy of my father returning home after a long day of work, and his joy in being greeted in

his return.

This Lent, God is (and has been, and will be) calling you to return even now, with all your heart. As I was overjoyed in my earthly father's return, I pray that in this season of Lent, we all might be overjoyed to return to our Heavenly Father. And with that same joy, Lent calls us to do even more in returning to God.

We are to fast, weep, and even be sorrowful; we have an opportunity to reflect on those things that the world tells us to bottle up and ignore, and to do so with all our heart. Returning to God is not as an act, but our faith tearing our heart asunder. In fasting we are reminded that we don't survive on bread alone. In our weeping we can place it all before God and not let it eat us from the inside out. In our sorrow we can rejoice in the love that brings about the sorrow, as the cost of love is sorrow.

We return knowing the very nature of God which is against the worst parts of human treachery. God is merciful rather than judgemental. Compassionate rather than callous. God is very patient rather than short tempered. God is full of faithful love rather than indifferent evil. And last but not least, God is ready to forgive over holding a grudge. In my first memory, those are all the things I felt; summed up simply for these matters: love. Love of Mom, Dad, and my brothers. Love of family. Love of the simple moments that are forged upon our hearts. This Lent, no matter the season of life that you are in, you can return to the eternal things of God that you need and abandon the trappings of human deceit.

Shalom,

Pastor Jay

1100 Airport Road
Godfrey, IL 62035
(618) 466 - 3624
www.godfreyfirstumc.org

Pastor
Jay Hanscom
revjayhanscom@gmail.com
618-604-3609

Office Manager
Barb Hammond
godfreyfirstumcoffice@gmail.com

Comptroller
Karen McAtee
mchuny@charter.net

Youth Director
Joe Leonard
gpsyouthministry@gmail.com

Music Director
Joe Leonard
imnoavgjoe@gmail.com

Director of Children and Family Ministries
Ann McLaughlin
annemac1120@gmail.com

Nursery Coordinator
Missy Schonasky
missyschonasky@yahoo.com

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—home after being in rehab—PTL!
- Bill Pyatt—date is set for surgery in mid-April.
- Beatrice Ormond (Larry & Deb Ormond's granddaughter) has a septic infection in her joints.
- Mary Lou Beck—struggling with the flu.
- Renae White's hairdresser who is having cancer surgery.
- Robert Franke—dealing with multiple health issues—submitted by Renae White.
- Etta Jane Leonard fell and had to get a couple of staples in her head. She was sent home and is recovering nicely.
- Todd Lofton—Jim Lofton's son had a brain tumor removed. It appears to be a successful surgery, but he will have months of therapy/recovery.
- Gil Rogalski—health concerns
- Dee Logan—Glenda Link's neighbor whose cancer has returned.
- Ron Beuttel—fell and had to get stitches in his head. Prayers for Patty as she is the caregiver.
- Jane Hellrung's brother & sister-in-law in Wichita having medical issues.
- Ray & Carolyn West—Ray has had several falls recently and Carolyn has trouble physically helping him.
- Linda Grames—having a diagnostic MRI—pray for calmness.
- Linda Ogden—friend of the Beem family who was diagnosed with cancer.
- Chuck Tucker—undergoing more tests and has a scope/biopsy scheduled.
- Cheri Darr—Connie Beyer's former boss with health concerns and had a procedure done.
- Ann Bowen—health concern following a fall.
- Gary Nimmo—health concern.
- Crystal Jennings—her cancer has returned.
- Sherry Greenwood—health concern.
- A friend's daughter with throat cancer.
- Bonnie Tyler—health concern.
- Sue & Donnie Ansell—both had the flu.
- Barb Miller—health concern.
- Alyssa Knight—hurt her back shoveling snow/
- Glen Pruitt—recovery from liver transplant and insurance issues—submitted by Bob & Elaine Weaver.
- Lisa Simmons—Linda Schwartz's daughter with health problems.
- Jean Lacy—Missy Schonasky's mom has 2 fractured ribs that are very painful.
- Dana Robinson—Megan Tyler's sister-in-law recovering from a car accident.
- Dave Robinson—Megan Tyler's father who had a stroke.
- Marion Sanders—celebrated her 90th birthday on February 1!! Congratulations, Marion!
- Earle Perry—Dawn Perry's uncle who had surgery for a brain bleed.
- Sandra & Richard Lopez—Bob Albrecht's sister & brother-in-law—Sandra broke her hip and Richard has stomach cancer.
- Chandler Bogert & family—Doug & Danielle's Bogert's son coming home from his year in Korea with the Air Force and making a quick move to Georgia from North Dakota.
- Jeff Weakley—ongoing health concern
- Joe Hill—Rae Hill's husband was able to come home for a day
- Loretta Dunphy—recovering from knee 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.
- 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...

- ~Mark Miller—husband of Jan (VanMeter) Miller, who died recently in Wisconsin.
- ~Jenny French—Rob Hoffmann's sister who died in Alabama
- ~Norman Davis, Pastor Jay's grandfather who died February 15, in Maine. There will be no services at this time.
- ~Rev Edwin Hann, Marjorie Wheeler's brother-in-law who died February 19. Prayers of comfort requested for his family



Offering

2/1/2026—2/22/2026

General Fund Offering

2-1	\$ 23,839
2-8	\$ 3,707
2-15	\$ 6,930
2-22	\$ 2,620
TOTAL	\$ 37,096

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,550

Monthly Total: \$ 41,646

Designated Offerings:

Apportionments	\$ 120
Preserving Our Future	\$ 50,130
TOTAL	\$ 50,250

January income	\$ 42,052
January expenses	\$ 23,650
Year to date income	\$ 42,052
Year to date expenses	\$ 23,650
Net YTD Income	\$ 18,402



WILD BUNCH will meet on Friday March 27 for family game night. If you missed last month, please go to your fish fry early, then come have some fun some with us. That is 6:30 p.m. Friday March 27. We always have popcorn to share! Questions, call Ellen Bogard at 618-696-7979.

EASTER BREAKFAST

The NOW and Fellowship Hour committees will be serving breakfast on Easter morning between the 7:30 and 10:00 a.m. services (about 8:45). We have a menu for breakfast and will be asking for volunteers to help make the various items. We can even give you the recipe! Please contact Ellen Bogard at 618-696-7979 or Susie Lowe at 618-610-6325 to volunteer.



COMMUNION SERVERS

Tired of being a pew potato, here's a way to get active. I have the easy responsibility of getting communion servers and would like your help. Such a simple, occasional, and rewarding job and you are already at church! Please call or speak to me on Sunday morning and I will get you out of the pew. Glenda Link 618 466-4895 or 618 741-1986.



Attendance:

2-1	102
2-8	95
2-15	99
2-22	79
Monthly Total	375
Monthly Average	94
Yearly Average	98



March 17

NEW!!! CHIT CHAT HOUR

Our first gathering of ladies was a success and we look forward to meeting again on Monday, March 16, at 10 a.m.! Come for a casual time of getting together and chit catting



CARE TEAM

Care Team will meet on March 4 at 10:00 to write cards for those in need of care. Also, we will have a guest who wants to share some inspiration with us. Please make a special effort to come and hear what she has to say.



GODFREY METHODIST MEN

The GMM will continue to meet on the second Saturday of each month at 8:00 AM. Meetings include donuts, coffee, devotion, and fellowship.



Following the meeting, men who are able and willing can assist with church maintenance projects in support of the trustees. Those unable to participate in the projects are still encouraged to attend the meetings and share in the fellowship.

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. Keep in mind our goal of collecting 2026 items in the year 2026!!



DOMINOES

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



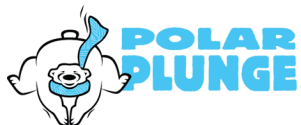
IGNITE YOUTH CHOIR

We started our 2026 off with a bang with 18 new youth coming to see what Ignite is all about. When the dust settles, it looks like we'll be at 56 members, 13 more than our biggest group last year. It's not too late to join. If you know of a middle or high school youth that you think might be interested, please let me know and have them come try us out. We meet on Sundays from 3:00 to 5:30. Our program this year features songs in various worship styles: gospel, southern gospel, traditional, and contemporary. Our title song is Total Praise and our theme is although we may worship in different ways, we all worship the same loving and accepting God.



GPS YOUTH MINISTRY & POLAR PLUNGE

The start of Ignite also brings new youth to GPS. In our first two weeks of Ignite, we've had 42 and 41 youth at GPS!! Needless to say, we are busting at the seams in the youth room! On Saturday, February 28, we will have 32 participants in our annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics. As of this writing, we have raised over \$4500 for the Special Olympics Illinois Region J. Thanks to Ann for sharing our plunge with the College for Life students at Lewis and Clark. Several of these students have participated in our Bible Discovery Day VBS for special needs students. What a joy it is to see these amazing people participate in this awesome activity.



MUSIC

The Good News Sanctuary Choir will be singing during worship on Palm Sunday, March 29. We will have two rehearsals to prepare for it on March 18 and March 25 at 6:30 p.m.



Soup or Soaper Bowl a Success!

Who cares about the final score of the Super Bowl game! We are grateful for the generosity of our congregation in donating 198 soup cans or other non-perishable food items and 153 soaps, cleaning supplies, or personal hygiene items.



These donations were taken to the Crisis Food Center in downtown Alton. For a comparison, in 2025 we gathered 199 food items and 91 soaps, cleaning and personal hygiene items. Thanks for making this project a success!

HOLY HIKING BOOTS

The first hike of 2026 is Saturday, March 7, at 9 a.m.

We will go to Fort Belle Fontaine, 13002 Bellefontaine Road, St. Louis, MO, 63138

*Dogs are welcome

*Most of the trail is level with a lot of stairs at one end and a gentle hill at the other

Call or text Tina Hoffmann with any questions at 618-960-5396.



Marcus Hoffmann and family would like to thank everyone for the prayers and the donations toward Marcus's Eagle Scout project. I am proud to say I have earned my Eagle Scout rank and I could not have done it without so many good people to stand behind me.

Sincerely

Marcus Hoffmann

The Hoffmann family would like to say thank you to everyone who sent cards, phone calls, texts, treats, and words of encouragement these last few weeks for the loss of Rob's sister and Tina's mother. It has meant more than you know!!!

GODFREY FIRST TRIVIA NIGHT

Save the date for a GFUMC Trivia Night on Friday, April 10. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and trivia will begin at 7 p.m. Bring snacks to share for your table. We would like to offer baskets for a Silent Auction. If you or your ministry are interested in donating a basket, please see Tina Hoffmann.

Watch your email, Sunday bulletin and the April Messenger for more details.



JAM Ministry Update

JAM has experienced a gradual start with our new 10:00 a.m. worship schedule. While a few children have been attending the 9:00 a.m. JAM class, we may need to reassess the program timing for next fall to best serve our families. One option under consideration is offering JAM during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. For now, JAM will continue to meet at 9:00 a.m., with upcoming lessons focused on the Easter season. We warmly invite all elementary-aged students to join us!

“Egg”stra Special Easter Craft Party & Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 4 at 9:30 a.m.

We are excited to share that plans are coming together for our “Egg”stra Special Easter Craft Party and Egg Hunt! This event is designed as a community outreach opportunity, welcoming families to connect with our church in a fun and meaningful way.

The craft party will be held in the sanctuary, where tables will be arranged around the perimeter, each featuring a different craft activity. Both secular and Christian-themed crafts will be available, and children may move from table to table at their own pace to complete projects.

In addition to crafts, families can enjoy:

- * Face painting
- * Photo opportunities
- * A visit from the Easter Bunny
- * Light snacks



We are also planning for two or three volunteers to dress as disciples and share the Easter story with the children in an engaging and age-appropriate way. After approximately one hour of craft time, we will move outdoors for our Easter Egg Hunt—an event that is sure to be a highlight of the morning!

We have already received very positive feedback from the community and are excited to continue expanding our children’s ministry outreach through events like this.

How You Can Help??

We welcome and appreciate your support in making this event a success! You can help by:

- * Volunteering to host a craft table and assist children (all crafts have been planned and materials purchased)
- * Dressing as a disciple to help share the Easter story
- * Serving as a greeter to welcome families
- * Donating Easter candy to fill plastic eggs

Thank you for helping us create a warm, inviting experience for our church and community families.



Looking Ahead: Vacation Bible School 2026

Mark your calendars! Plans are already underway for Vacation Bible School 2026. Join us June 14–18 as we explore the nature of God at **Rainforest Falls**. More details will be shared in the coming months—we can’t wait for this exciting adventure together!



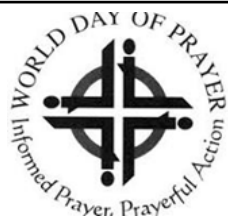
Easter Lily Order Form

If you would like to order Easter lilies for Easter Sunday, April 5, please complete the information below and submit this form and your payment into the offering plate or have it in the office by Monday, March 30. Flowers will be displayed on Easter and you may take your plant home after either worship service.

Person ordering _____

In Memory of/In Honor of

_____ Easter Lily (how many) \$15.00 for each plant – amount paid _____



A CALL TO PRAYER

On Friday, March 6th in observance of
World Day of Prayer



the sanctuary at Godfrey First will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for prayer and meditation. There is no formal service. Sample prayers and meditations will be available if desired. We invite you to pray for any concerns you may have on your heart or mind - stay as long as you wish. World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action" and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. This year's theme: "I will give you rest" is a direct quote from Matthew 11:28, where Jesus invites those who are weary, burdened, or struggling under heavy loads to find relief, comfort, and spiritual refreshment in him. This promise focuses on easing spiritual, emotional, and mental burdens, rather than just physical sleep.

Won't you join together with the millions of Christians worldwide on this day of prayer?

RUMMAGE SALE INFO

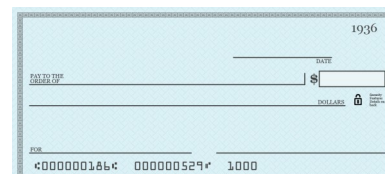
The Rummage Sale will be held on Friday and Saturday, April 24 & 25. We will need help setting up all that week! Mark your calendars now so you can spend some quality time with your church family! It's a great week of getting to know each other and have fun working together! If you have any questions, please contact Shirley Albrecht at 618-946-1821 or Jean Garrett at 618-960-1354.

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!!



REMINDER!!!

NOW is the perfect time to set this up!!! You can have your tithe/offering sent directly from your checking account to the church. You need to complete the "Authorization for Direct ACH Payment" (which you can request from the office) and return it with a voided check attached. **We can send a copy of the form directly to you for you to complete.** If you have any questions about how this works, please speak to Karen McAtee, our Comptroller.



March 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30 pm	2	3 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm	4 Care Team 10 am	5 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	6 World Day of Prayer 9am-6pm	7 Private Function 10 am
8 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30 pm	9	10 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm	11	12 Church Council 6 pm	13	14 Godfrey Method- ist Men 8 am Private Function 1-4 pm
15 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30 pm	16 Chit Chat Hour 10 am	17 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm 	18 Choir Practice 6 pm	19 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	20	21
22 Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30 pm	23	24 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm	25 Choir Practice 6 pm	26 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	27 Wild Bunch Game Night 6:30 pm	28
29 PALM SUNDAY Journey Sunday School 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Ignite 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30 pm	30	31 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm				

*Godfrey First United
Methodist Church*

1100 Airport Rd.
Godfrey, IL 62035

Phone: 618-466-3624

Fax: 618-466-3629

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Vision:

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

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.

Holy Week @ **GODFREY  FIRST**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP – March 29 – 10:00am

MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP – April 2 – 7:00pm

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP – April 3 – 7:00pm

***“Egg”stra Special Easter Craft Party & Egg Hunt
April 4 – 9:30am***

***EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP – April 5 – 7:30 & 10:00am
Continental Breakfast 8:45am***