

THE MESSENGER

September 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!*

We can take so much for granted. At the end of July, I was fortunate enough to go on vacation back to my motherland, Newry, Maine. I got to become extremely dangerous and think I have a better understanding of electricity (I don't, but let me pretend). I got to play a bunch of board games and card games with family and friends (FYI, if you wanna learn Cribbage, come out to The Wild Bunch's Game Night on September 4th at 6pm and I'll be teaching y'all how to play; be ready to say, "Go," begrudgingly a lot). And I got to see my friend Allan before we knew he was sick with Pancreatic Cancer. I took seeing Allan for granted; playing games, joking, thinking I'd see him again just as he was either in January or next summer.

But now, I get to consider what fellowship, hospitality, and God's will really mean when earthly woe rears its ugly self. We'll start with fellowship. Hebrews 10:25, "Don't stop meeting together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as you see the day drawing near." One of the things my amazing sister Kelsie is doing is building a, "Support Plan," for Allan and the family. A support plan is turning, "We'll get it done," "Next time," "Whatever you need, I'm there," into concrete plans; "I'm dropping off Lasagna Wednesday night," "Yes, we'll have a virtual board game night on Tuesday," "I'm driving you to your doctors appointment this Friday." Honing in the Hebrews scripture, we as believers need to keep meeting. That's why I'm teaching any of y'all that wanna learn Cribbage on an established date, rather than when, "I'll get to it."

Contemplating hospitality, let's bring in 1 Peter 4:9, "Open your homes to each other without complaining.." Allan was very appreciative of the Care Team card that he received. So many others are appreciative of the Care Team's ministry. We, as a church, (a home away from home) are very hospitable; I know which congregants are gonna say hi to any new person in worship, I know new folk will shake hands and socialize with at least 5-7 people during Passing of the Peace, and I know if they stay after for snacks, who will talk with them. We don't have many folk who grumble when greeting one another, but I know the type. We're all trying to reach out to Allan with low-pressure, "thinking of you," and the like; we're here, even in the small ways, and we do it without grumbling. Let's keep doing that, both in our personal lives and at worship.

Ending on God's will, I'm always reminded of Romans 12:2 "Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature." I could fret, stew, or withdraw from what's going on with Allan's life... but we're all supporting him, checking in on him, and remaining hopefully in God's will during a trying time. I could let myself become angry with what's going on. Instead, I'm leaving it to God to show me what comes next... and not taking for granted all the beauty I have in my life, thanks be to God.

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.

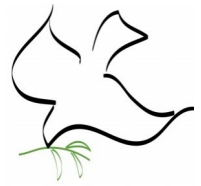
~ James 5: 14

- McKenzie (Bogert) Yates—Doug & Danielle Bogert's daughter in Florida had surgery August 25 for a lodged gall stone and pancreatitis—she lives in Florida.
- Allan Brown—Pastor Jay's cousin diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.
- George Guzlas—Tina Hoffmann's 24 year old nephew diagnosed with M.S.
- Tam Larson & her family—friend of Etta Jane & Jerry Leonard who has cancer and not doing well. She and Etta Jane graduated from St. Luke's School of Nursing in 1962. Tam also married a good Marine friend of Jerry's and they have been close friends since 1962.
- Wes LeBrun—recent graduate of GPS and Ignite began his college career at Missouri S&T by having an appendectomy! After a brief visit home to recover, Wes is heading back to school to begin the year.
- Joe Hill who was hospitalized with kidney issues.
- Prayers for Rae Hill—she fell when leaving the hospital and hit her face, elbow and wrist. Went back in to the ER and had x-rays and was cleared to go home.
- Renae White is seeing a shoulder surgeon—prayers for simple results.
- Griggs Family who had a house fire.
- Prayers that everyone starting school has a wonderful experience—students, teachers, and support staff!!
- Bob Handling—Connie Beyer's dad with health concerns.
- Ruby Brunstein—had hip replacement surgery on Friday and came home Saturday! Continued prayers for an easy recovery.
- Prayers for all of our kids starting school. Special prayers for the GPS and Ignite members heading off to college, and their parents!
- JOY-Joe, Susan, and the whole family, were in Minnesota to celebrate the wedding of their son, Matt. Everything was perfect. Congratulations to Matt and Jenna.
- Marcy Reed—Al & Pat Reed's daughter diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Don Long, Sr.—at Wesley Village in Macomb for rehab.
- Todd Witt—health concern
- Dean and Jan Dodson—Dean with health concerns and Jan moving into a condo to be near Dean.
- 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 a CONNECT card on Sunday.. The power of prayer is never-ending!

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

~Mona Mason (Brakemeyer) who died August 17. Some of you may remember Mona from when she attended GFUMC when we were located on Grace Street.
~Linda Widman who died in July. There will be a Celebration of Life service on September 12 in Ft. Myers, Florida. Linda was a member several years ago before moving to Florida.
~Rev. Dean Blackburn who died Sunday, August 16.



VOTER REGISTRAR

Susie Lowe is a Voter Registrar if anyone needs to register to vote. You can register up to October 4, which is the last day to register prior to Election Day, Tuesday, November 3.

Register

to

VOTE

Holy Hiking Boots will hike on Sunday, September 20. Watch for details on where and what time!!



Offering

8/2/2026—8/23/2026

General Fund Offering

8-2	\$ 6,694
8-9	\$17,811
8-16	\$ 2,941
8-23	\$ 1,667
TOTAL	\$29,113

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,750

Monthly Total: \$ 33,863

Designated Offerings:

Helping Hand	\$ 300
TOTAL	\$ 300

July income	\$ 17,401
July expenses	\$ 30,249
Year to date income	\$ 206,131
Year to date expenses	\$ 197,310
Net YTD Income	\$ 8,821

Attendance:

8-2	78
8-9	76
8-16	97
8-23	90
Monthly Total	341
Monthly Average	85
Yearly Average	100

LITTLE KNIGHTS TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER

Think you know the 90's & 2000's? Grab your friends and join us for a night of fun, laughter, and friendly competition while supporting a great cause! All proceeds will help fund playground mulch improvements and new playground equipment & enhancements. Bring your own food; soda available for purchase; popcorn available for purchase; no alcoholic beverages allowed. Event takes place Saturday, September 19. Price is \$120 per table with up to 8 players per table. Doors open at 5 p.m., trivia begins at 6 p.m. Silent auction will be available throughout the evening. Call the church office (618-466-3624) to make your reservation!



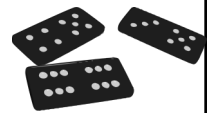
GriefShare®

Rev. Bill and Brenda Pyatt are leading a 13 week session of GriefShare program which started 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.



WILD Bunch - Family Game Night

September 4 is our monthly night OUT. Anyone interested in learning **cribbage**, this is your opportunity! Pastor Jay has offered to teach us. You can also bring any game you enjoy, and someone will be happy to join in.



We meet at **6:00 p.m. and share snacks or dessert before starting**. Water is provided. We try to finish around 9:00 but sometimes run a little LATER. **Please join us, the more the merrier!** Questions, please call Glenda. I'm in the directory! 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!! Through August 23, we collected 149 canned good and non perishable items making our year to date total 1,923!! Yay! Beginning in September, we are starting the Fall Harvest Food Drive. Suggested items for fall are: canned vegetables, rice, pasta, instant potatoes, applesauce, stuffing mix, etc. Of course, any items are welcome! Let's fill up our grocery cart as we close in on our goal of 2026 items in 2026!!



CARE TEAM

September 2 will be our **ONLY Care Team** meeting in September. The Salad Bonanza is on the 16th which is the third Tuesday, and we all need to support it. Please come on the 2nd and we can do all the cards for the month. We stayed on August 19th and separated all the cards you have generously donated. We only need Anniversary cards currently. If you find some you like, please share those. See you on the 2nd of September at 10:00. Thank you!



CHIT CHAT

The Chit Chat ladies will meet on Monday, September 21 at 10 a.m. We will have just finished up with the Salad Bonanza, so that will be discussed. If you have any other ideas of things to do or talk about, please see Shirley Albrecht or Jean Garrett!



GODFREY METHODIST MEN



The Godfrey United Methodist Men will begin meeting again on Saturday, 12 September at 8:00am. All men are invited to attend a breakfast of donuts and coffee along with fellowship time. Beginning at 9:00am those men willing and able with weather permitting will have several church property maintenance tasks to choose from to work for the trustees. Those unable to work can simply stay and continue with the fellowship. Task not completed in September will be back on the list for the October meeting,

The work list for men to choose which task best suits them:

- LEVEL BRICKS ON BOTH EAST AND WEST SIDES OF PRAYER GARDEN.
- REMOVE METAL LANDSCAPING TRIM NEAR BENCH ON NORTHEAST SIDE OF PRAYER GARDEN.
- TRIM / CUT DOWN ALL LOW LIMBS FROM WEEPING WILLOW TREE NEXT TO POND.
- WEED WHIP AROUND SHACK.
- WEED WHIP AROUND CIRCUMFERENCE OF VEGETABLE GARDEN.
- WEED WHIP AROUND CIRCUMFERENCE OF POND.
- WEED WHIP AROUND CIRCUMFERENCE OF CHURCH BUILDING (EXCEPT ON WEST SIDE).
- WEED WHIP AROUND ALL LIGHT POLES AND SIGNS AND MAILBOX AND CULVERT PIPES.
- WEED WHIP WALKING PATH AT NORTH END OF PARKING LOT.
- EDGE ALONG AREAS OF PARKING LOT.
- REMOVE ALL BRICKS AROUND ALL TREES AND RESHAPE (NOT FLAG POLE AREA).
- SPRAY GRASS AND WEEDS ALONG ENTIRE WESTERN EDGE OF BUILDING.
- SPRAY ROCK ALONG SIDEWALK ON SOUTH-SIDE OF PARKING LOT AND SIDEWALK GOING TO EDUCATION WING.
- ADD ROCK TO PRAYER GARDEN.
- PRUNING IN PRAYER GARDEN .
- EDGE ALONG ALL CONCRETE WALKS.
- SPRAY AROUND LARGE URNS IN PRAYER GARDEN.
- CLEAN COBWEBS FROM WINDOWS UNDER AWNING.
- FIX MASONRY NEAR SHACK GARAGE DOOR.
- STAIN PARSONAGE DECK.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

For the safety and security of our congregation, guests, and facilities, portions of the church property are monitored by video surveillance. Smile for the camera!!

WIFI PASSWORD

If you have been signed on to the church's WIFI when you are here, you will need to update your phone. You will click GFUMC-Guest and enter the password: Wesley1100. If you need assistance, please see Pastor Jay, Joe or Barb.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The trustees have been busy with several large projects recently being completed. Preserving Our Future funds were used to pay for these much-needed projects.

1. The office area HVAC unit had a potentially dangerous exchanger leak and was replaced with a new unit.
2. The sanctuary fluorescent light bulbs were all replaced with more energy efficient LED bulbs. Ameren provided the LED bulbs at no cost.
3. Over half of the parking lot lights were not working and the rest had reached the end of their expected life. All (15) heads were replaced with new LED heads.

Many thanks to Chairman Bob Lowe and the trustees for their efforts taking care of our wonderful facilities. And praise God for our congregation who are faithful providing the funds for these projects.

A special thanks to Arrow Sign Company for installing the rope on the flagpole with their "cherry picker" and to Rod Thornton for getting the flag back up!

From the Children's Ministry Director, Ann McLaughlin

Thank you, church family, for making our Back-to-School month such a wonderful success! The NOW committee in concert with Children's Ministry began our month by taking a "Teacher Goodie" basket to each of the four schools in Godfrey. We realized that teachers would be working in their classroom to get things ready for the students and thought it would be nice to surprise them with some treats!

We also collected 50 filled backpacks to be shared with students at North Elementary, Gilson Brown, and Lewis & Clark Elementary Schools. These backpacks will go to students who are in need and are always greatly appreciated by our Godfrey schools. The generosity of our congregation was amazing!

For the Early Childhood Center, we purchased much-needed supplies, including Kleenex, wipes, and underwear. In addition, our congregation generously gave over \$375 through our Change-for Change buckets. These funds will assist the social worker at Gilson Brown Elementary in providing coats, shoes, gloves, and other necessities for children who may be experiencing financial hardship.

Celebrating a New School Year

On Sunday, August 9, we celebrated Back-to-School Sunday with a special blessing. Students and adults who were returning to school or beginning another school-related occupation brought their backpacks forward and received a special blessing from Pastor Jay. It was a beautiful reminder that God goes with us wherever we go.

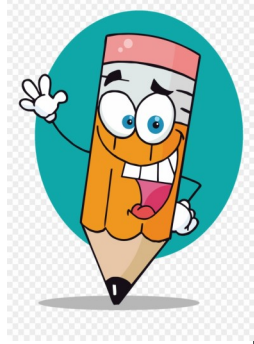
On August 16, we remembered the teachers who have made a difference in our lives. We wrote down the names of some of our favorite teachers and spent time praying for them and giving thanks for the impact they had on us.

School Spirit day was held on August 23, as many congregants wore their favorite school spirit wear and reminisced about their school days. It was such a fun way to celebrate our students, teachers, and all those connected to our schools!

We wrapped up our Back-to-School month on the final Sunday in August with a blessing of the filled backpacks. Many students will benefit from these much-needed supplies and it's encouraging to see the heart we have for the students in Godfrey.

JAM Is Back!

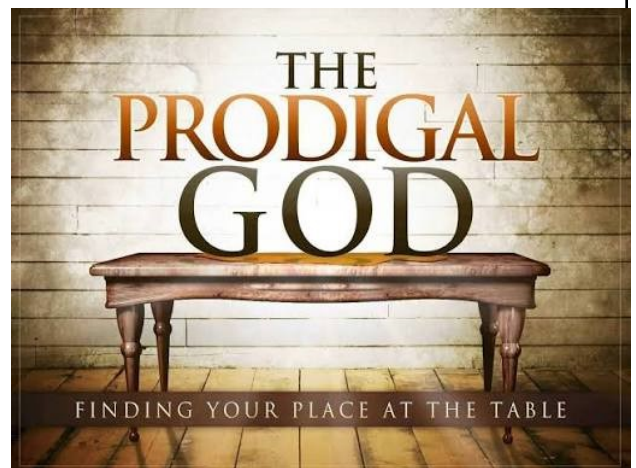
Our JAM (Jesus and Me) program also got underway again in August. We meet each Sunday at 9 am. This fall we are studying the life of Jesus and the many wonderful miracles he performed. Thank you again to our entire church family for supporting our children and families. Your generosity, prayers, encouragement, and willingness to participate make such a difference. What a blessing it is to be a church that loves its children and helps them grow in faith!



THE PRODIGAL GOD

Bob Weaver will be leading *"The Prodigal God, Finding Your Place at the Table"*, a 6 week video/discussion series by Tim Keller. This series takes a fresh look at Jesus' best known parable as a paradigm for the central messages of Christian grace, hope and salvation. This starts September 13 at 8:45 a.m. It's a little earlier than the usual Sunday School time so we can get in the video and discussion.

Please let Bob know if you would like a study guide so they can be ordered! His number is 904-305-9110.



GPS YOUTH MINISTRY

GPS Youth Ministry will begin its 2026/2027 school year on Sunday September 13. We begin each week with a gathering time from 5:30-6:00. At 6:00, we come together for announcements, an activity, and discussion topic introduction before splitting into smaller discussion groups. We'll get the ball rolling in our first week with Talking Points where we have a full group discussion on various topics ranging from what's your favorite pizza topping, to what class would you like to see added to your school's curriculum, and how do you defend your faith. On September 20, we will begin a series called FUN-DAMENTAL where we'll discuss how God Celebrates With You, Unashamed Joy, Joy is Your Strength, and The Purpose of Fun. We are using a new curriculum from Re-frame, which was founded in public school open forums where students asked real questions about identity, mental health, relationships, and faith. It's honest, gospel-centered, and grounded in the world students actually live in.



On Wednesday September 23, we will participate in the National See You at the Pole student led prayer event that takes place around flag poles at public schools. On Saturday September 26, we will host a kick off pool party at our house. Details on that are coming.

GPS Youth Ministry is open to all middle and high school youth regardless of their faith traditions or backgrounds. They do not have to be a member of Godfrey First UMC, or any church for that matter. If you have any questions, please reach out to Joe or Susan Leonard.

HYMN SING/CHURCH PICNIC

On September 27, we will have our annual Hymn Sing and Church Picnic. The NOW Committee will be organizing everything for the picnic, but you're asked to bring a lawn chair and maybe a canopy if you have one. See the NOW report elsewhere in this newsletter. If you have any suggestions for the hymn sing, please let Joe know.

NATIONAL BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

Sunday September 20 is National Back to Church Sunday. If you haven't been in a while, or know someone who hasn't, this is the Sunday to pay us a visit. There is adult and children's Sunday School at 9:00 followed by worship at 10:00.



September 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Private Function 6:30 pm	2 Care Team 10 am GriefShare 1:30 pm	3 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	4 Game Night 6 pm	5
6 Half Truths Book Study 9 am JAM 9 am Worship 10 am	7	8 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	9 GriefShare 1:30 pm	10 Church Council 6 pm	11	12 Godfrey Method- ist Men 8 am
13 The Prodigal God Book Study 8:45 JAM 9 am Worship 10 am GPS 5:30 pm	14 Private Function 9:30 am	15 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	16 Salad Bonanza 11 am—1 pm GriefShare 1:30 pm	17 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	18 Grandparents Day for Little Knights Daycare 7:45 am	19 Little Knights Trivia Night
20 The Prodigal God Book Study 8:45 JAM 9 am Worship 10 am Holy Hiking Boots (TBA)	21 Chit Chat 10 am	22 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am NOW Meeting 10:30 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	23 Staff Meeting 10 am GriefShare 1:30 pm	24 Romans Bible Study 7 pm	25	26
27 The Prodigal God Book Study 8:45 JAM 9 am Worship/Hymn Sing 10 am Church Picnic 11:30 am	28	29 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society Practice 6:30 pm	30 GriefShare 1:30 pm			

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.

ANNUAL SALAD BONANZA & BAKE SALE!

Mark your calendars!!

- Date & Time: Wednesday, September 16 , 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Place: Godfrey First United Methodist Church, Godfrey, IL.
- Ticket Price: \$10.00 which includes salads, breads and drinks.
(Desserts are sold separately.)
- Silent Auction Baskets will be on display for your to bid on! If you are interested in providing a basket, please see Linda Grames or call her at 618-792-7709
- Tickets and sign up sheets for bringing salads are available on Sundays through September 13.
- We need as many as possible to sign up for salads, the bake sale and to work on September 16
- We need 6-7 who will work on Tuesday, September 15, starting at 10 a.m. to get things set up.
- Carry outs are available. Delivery is available for 5 or more orders. Call 618-466-3624 and ask for the kitchen for a carryout order.
- After worship on Sunday, September 13, we will need help getting the tables and chairs set up and would appreciate your assistance.

If you have any questions or need a group table, please contact **Carolyn West at (618) 972-2670** or **Shirley Albrecht at (618) 946-1821** by September 15th.

Hymn Sing and

All Church Picnic

Sunday, September 27, at 10 a.m.
Come and sing lots of your favorite hymns then enjoy fellowship with each other at the picnic! We will again be barbecuing in the backyard with hot dogs and bratwurst. There will be chips, baked beans, salad and cookies Tents will be set up in the yard and a few games will be available. Mark your calendars for this fun event! Plan to bring a lawn chair and join us!

