

THE MESSENGER

December 2025



"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 1st United Methodist Church, before we start our regularly scheduled newsletter from Pastor, a quick announcement: **On January 4th and 11th of 2026, there will be combined worship at 9:30 a.m.** ALSO, at **10:30 a.m. on January 11th, 2026 there will be a "State of the Church" hosted Church Council meeting** that the church is invited to attend. Look out for more details in the coming weeks.

With that announcement, as we continue to look forward and see the exciting new things God is doing at Godfrey First United Methodist Church, let's consider what it means to continue the legacy of GFUMC and investigate if you're called to be a contemporary of GFUMC. Get your Bible ready and turn to Matthew, chapter 28, verses 19-20.

NOTE: For this year, we'll be using the ancient practice of Lectio Divina (Holy Reading) as the template for my letters in *The Messenger*. It's a 4-part process to read scripture and goes like this: Read, Reflect, Respond, and Rest. We'll go through each part, before you read my work of Lectio Divina, you're invited to your own **[Holy Reading]**. Before we read the scriptures let's start by invoke the Holy Spirit (the foundation of Lectio Divina). Would you please pray with me?

Ever-present God, You sent Your to lead us in Your will. Reveal where we are to go, aid us in making disciples, and teach us Your way that we may teach others, that we continue with Christ to Your will with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Amen. With our attention now upon the ever-present Holy Spirit, let's open our hearts to today's scripture by engaging the text as if we've never read it before. Let us slowly and purposefully read Matthew 28:19-20. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age..

Let's reflect on these verses. **[Pause to reflect]**. My attention is drawn to how we are to make disciples through teaching what God commands us to do. And to teach, you must learn all that there is to know about the subject area. Today, we can sum up Christ's teaching of what we are to teach by recalling His summation of the commandments: "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.*" ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: *You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.* ⁴⁰*All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.*" (Matthew 22:36-40, CEB). *As we ready ourselves to teach, we reflect on the God's will and...*

Respond to the text. **[Pause to respond]**. Are you called to teach commandments of Christ in active ministry, or to help continue the ministry of Jesus Christ here at GFUMC through continuing its legacy? This begs the question: *How are you called to teach new disciples? Where might you continue the legacy of GFUMC current ministries? What new ministries are you called by God to teach? Who do you know that need to be made a disciple of Christ? When will you say yes to leaving a legacy or becoming a new contemporary?*

Rest in holy reading. **[Pause to rest]**. You can teach. You can aid in active ministry. You can help leave a legacy here at GFUMC. Considering it all, *how will you respond to Christ's call in the Great Commission?*

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


- Becky Long—had spinal surgery November 25 in Peoria
- Jeff Weakley—ongoing health concern
- Chelsea Dunham had an emergency open heart surgery—friend of Ansell's.
- Prayers for Families who will be having their first holiday after the loss of someone close..
- Dorothy Bailey—had hip replacement surgery on November 5.
- Marcia Thornton— had a pacemaker put in November 5. She is doing fine.
- Ray West—had a heart procedure November 5 and is home doing well.
- Joe Hill—Rae Hill's husband is out of ICU but still needs prayers for recovery.
- Bob Varney — Missy Schonasky's son's fiance's father had surgery and is out of ICU. He is in therapy to regain strength. Thank you for the prayers.
- Family in the Philippines where there has recently been a typhoon and an earthquake. My son who is going through a bitter divorce—submitted by Harvey Chiles.
- "For my friend, Addison, to get her foot back in good shape"—submitted by Betty Mueller's granddaughter, Anna
- Prayers for Faye Jordan Kuhn, Andy & Marilyn Kuhn's great-granddaughter who has been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.
- Jan Rogalski's cousin, Judy (Cope) Strutt, passed away. Her family on the east coast needs prayers as they say goodbye and adjust to their new normal.
- Jennifer Morgan—Connie Beyer's co-worker with health concerns.
- Carol Gentry—regaining strength after heart surgery.
- Shannon Knight — had surgery to replace her pain pump. Surgery went well and now she's just taking it slow.
- Terri Lane—Brenda Pyatt's sister in Auburn, IN, with health issues.
- 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.
- 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...

~Alva Beckemeyer who died November 20 at the age of 99. She was very involved with the women's ministries when she was able to be active.



Advent
DEVOTIONALS

Please pick up your Advent 2025 Calendar of Devotions at the rear of the sanctuary or in the office. This pamphlet provides daily devotions to help you prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. Each day's ready, from the first Sunday of Advent to Christmas Day, is based on the Revised Common Lectionary and includes the Scripture, a short devotion, and a brief prayer. With her thoughtful and enjoyable meditations on the Bible, the author, Jan Turrentine, helps you prepare for the coming of Christ throughout the Advent season.

*Merry
christmas
and happy
new year*

Offering

11/2/25—11/23/25

General Fund Offering

11-2	\$ 5,433
11-9	\$ 1,660
11-16	\$ 5,924
11-23	\$ 6,890
TOTAL	\$19,907

Monthly Electronic Giving:

\$ 4,200

Monthly Total: \$ 24,107

Designated Offerings:

Memorial Fund	\$ 1,150
Helping Hand Fund	\$ 640
TOTAL	\$ 1,790

October income	\$ 19,740
October expenses	\$ 26,539
Year to date income	\$ 248,605
Year to date expenses	\$ 294,046
Net YTD Income	\$ -45,441

Attendance:

11-2	90
11-9	38/63
11-16	37/75
11-23	45/69

Monthly Total 417

Monthly Average 104

Yearly Average 99

HOLY HIKING BOOTS CHRISTMAS PARTY HIKE

I am excited to have our first Christmas party ON the trail! Everyone is welcome!

Sunday December 21, 2 p.m.

Pere Marquette State Park

*Dogs are welcome

*Bring your water to carry

Please RSVP for this particular hike

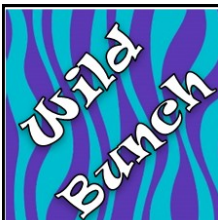
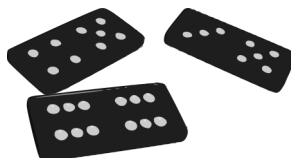
Stay tuned for changes due to weather

Call or text Tina Hoffmann at 618-960-5396



DOMINOES

We will not have Dominoes in December. Merry Christmas and we hope to see you in January!



The Wild Bunch is taking a break until 2026. We thank everyone who has attended our movie nights and helped with our projects. It has been a wonderful time of fellowship. The five movies we have viewed are – *Secondhand Lions*, *Hoosiers*, *The Peanut*

Butter Falcon, *Gifted Hands*, and *Temple Grandin*. Several of you have mentioned that you were sorry to miss

movie night. If you would like to view any of the movies at home, the DVD of the movies mentioned are available to loan through the church office. Please sign one out and in, on the sheet provided. You'll have to provide your own popcorn! 'Til next year have a blessed Christmas and remember to Walk In Love Daily.

Ellen Bogard & Glenda Link

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

In *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*, you are invited on an Advent-to-Christmas pilgrimage to draw closer to Jesus and invite others to join you on this journey. Let this study guide you to open your heart to the priceless gifts of the good news. Start your 4 week pilgrimage on Sunday, December 7th at 8:30am, and continue with us for three more Sundays on December 14th, 21st, and 28th at 8:30am, and experience the full riches of God's love.



Many thanks to those who helped decorate the church for Christmas on Monday, November 24. After the boxes and trees are all pulled out and spread all over the sanctuary, it's magical to see the end result! It's beautiful and it all seems to come together year after year! Thanks to all the helpers who spent their morning getting things done!



CARE TEAM



December 3 at 10:00 is our Care Team meeting. Consider helping during this special month of giving; a few minutes to let our friends know they are wished the best in the New Year. Hope to see you then.



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. We hope to see you there!

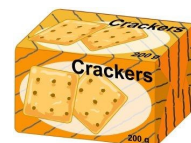
PASTOR'S GIFT

We are taking up a collection for a cash gift for Pastor Jay for Christmas. If you would like to donate, please give cash or write a check to Barb Hammond. **DO NOT** put your gift in the collection plate to go through the church funds please! You may put it in the collection plate, just not made out to the church. Otherwise, please give to Barb Hammond, Marcia Thornton or Mary Lou Beck. Let's help Pastor Jay celebrate Christmas with something special!



TUNA TREE!

We are "Growing a Tree" of peanut butter (crunchy or smooth), plain saltine crackers in the box and cans or individual packs of tuna fish for the Crisis Food Center. These items are helpful to those who don't have any means of cooking. Just place them on the "Tuna Tree" in the entryway now through the end of December. If you have other items for the CFC, please put them in the grocery cart across from the "Tuna Tree" and they will be taken as the cart fills. Thank you!



Toy Barrel collection for the Community Hope Center Toy Giveaway! Drop off new, unwrapped toys for ages 0-12. You may also purchase toys through their Amazon and Walmart Wish List. There is a QR code on the barrel which you can scan with your phone. If you purchase gifts that way, they will be sent directly to the Community Hope Center. If you are bringing toys, please bring them to church by Sunday, December 7, so they can be picked up. Thank you so much for your generosity!



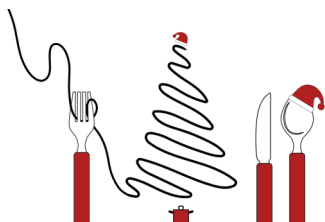
NURTURE, OUTREACH, WITNESS (N.O.W.)

The NOW committee members are grateful for the generous response from our congregation for the activities and collections related to Nurture, Outreach and Witness in 2025. We plan to kick off the new year by hosting another "Soup or Soap" collection for the NFL Super Bowl, to be played on February 8. Details will be shared in the January newsletter.



SECRET SISTER REVEAL

This is a reminder that the Secret Sister Reveal is Sunday, December 7 at 11:00 a.m. in the Common Grounds area. If the 9:30 a.m. service is over before 11:00 a.m., sit at the tables, visit and have something to drink. A light lunch will be served. Get a gift for your Secret Sister which does not exceed \$20.00. We will play a couple quick games, eat and reveal our Secret Sister. Since food will be fixed, PLEASE let Carolyn West (618-972-2670) know IF you will not be able to attend. You can drop off your secret sister gift at the church before the reveal. If you are interested in becoming a Secret Sister, you are welcome to come and join us to see if it is a fit for you. Hope to see all of you there. 'CHRIST IS BORN'.



A Special December for Our JAM Students

This December, our JAM (Jesus and Me) students will join their parents in the sanctuary for worship throughout the month. This unique opportunity allows our children to be a part of the season's special Advent services and events, and experience the richness of the Christmas story in a meaningful way.

The month will include:

- * Advent Worship: Each Sunday, students will participate in the Advent celebrations, helping them connect with the deeper meaning of the season.
- * Communion: On December 7th, our children will join in celebrating communion, experiencing this sacred tradition alongside their families.
- * Christmas Program: On December 14th, we'll enjoy the annual Christmas Program, featuring our Choir, Praise Team and Bell Choir.
- * March to the Manger: On December 21st, students will participate in this beloved tradition, symbolizing the journey to the birth of Jesus. *A Birthday Party for Jesus will follow the service.

A weekly Christmas focus for our JAM students will be introduced during Children's Chat.

With corresponding activities provided in the red Children's bags each Sunday.

- * December 7th - The Promise of a Savior - Isaiah 9:6
- * December 14th - Mary and Joseph's Journey - Luke 2:1-5
- * December 21st - The Birth of Jesus - Luke 2:6-7
- * December 28th - The Angels' Good News - Luke 2:8-14
- * January 4th - The Wise Men's Gifts - Matthew 2:1-12



We look forward to this special time of worship and celebration with our JAM students and their families, and we pray that this season will bring our church family closer together as we reflect on the incredible gift of Jesus Christ.

POINTSETTIA ORDER FORM

If you would like to order a poinsettia to help decorate our church for Christmas, please complete the information below and submit this form and your payment of \$10 per plant to the church office or in the offering plate by Sunday, December 7 . Flowers will be displayed on December 14 & 21 an you may take your plant home after the Christmas Eve services






Person ordering _____

In Memory of/In Honor of _____

\$10.00 for each plant — amount paid _____

December 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society 6:30 pm	3 Care Team 10 am Little Knights Christmas Pro- gram 6 pm	4 Choir Practice 6 pm Acts Bible Study 7 pm	5	6 Private Function 10 am
7 Advent Study 8:30 am Combined Wor- ship Service 9:30 Choir Practice 11 am Secret Sister Re- veal 11:30 am GPS Youth 5:30	8	9 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am GRCS 6:30 pm	10 Choir Practice 6 pm	11 Acts Bible Study 7 pm	12 NOW Commit- tee Meeting 10:30 am	13
14 Advent Study 8:30 am Combined Wor- ship Service 9:30 w/Christmas Pro- gram Great Rivers Choral Society Concert 3 pm GPS Youth 5:30	15	16 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am Great Rivers Choral Society 6:30 pm	17	18 Acts Bible Study 7 pm	19 Private Function 4-8 pm	20
21 Advent Study 8:30 am Combined Wor- ship Service with Live Nativity 9:30 Holy Hiking Boots 2 pm Blue Christmas Service 5:30 pm	22	23 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am	24 Christmas Eve Services 5 & 10 pm	25 CHRISTMAS DAY!! Office Closed 	26	27
28 Combined Wor- ship Service 9:30	29	30 Bible Study @ Round Table 6:15 am	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day Office Closed 	2	3

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Vision:

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

Time Sensitive Material. Please do not hold.

Advent Worship

November 30 – 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

December 7 – 9:30 a.m.

December 14 – 9:30 a.m.

★ Music Service

December 21 – 9:30 a.m.

Live Nativity

December 21 – 5:30 p.m.

Blue Christmas

December 24 – 5:00 & 10:00 p.m.

Candlelight Service

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