

First WORD

“...The Word Became Flesh...” John 1:14

February 2026

Behind every passionate disciple in our church, there is inevitably a powerful, intentional relationship that helped them stay faithful, grow deeper, and keep going. Recently, I heard a story that’s stayed with me. A man in our church gets up early most mornings to go walking—not just for exercise, but because an elderly woman in our congregation walks by his house and waits for him. If he comes out, they walk together. If not, she keeps going. He gets up most days because he knows someone is waiting for him. That’s accountability. And it matters.

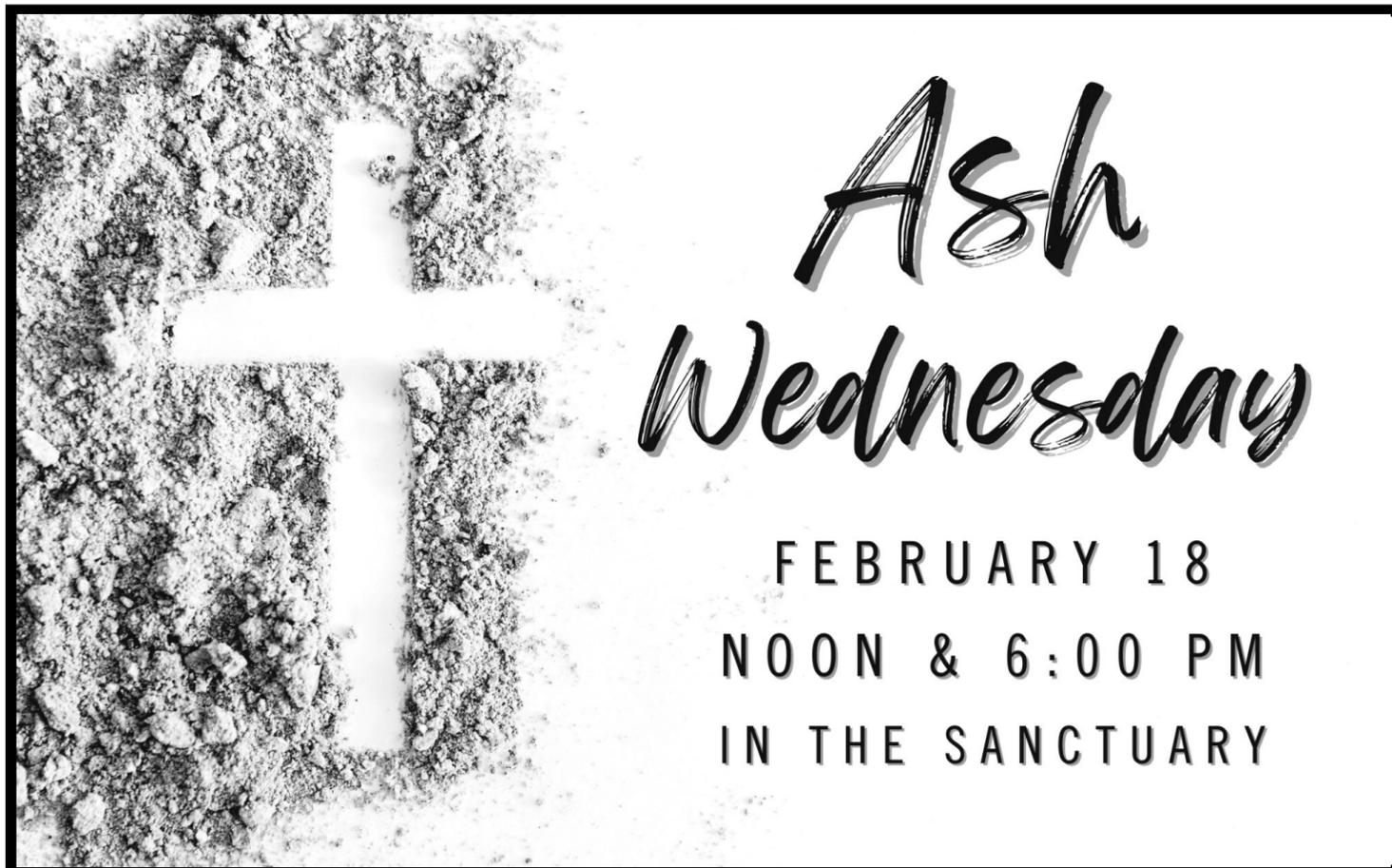
“The number one, game-changing factor for spiritual breakthrough and lasting transformation is accountable friendships.” Following Jesus was never meant to be a solo endeavor. John Wesley exhorts that Christians “watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.” The Bible calls us to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). At First Methodist, accountable friendships are a vital mark of discipleship—and a central part of our mission to cultivate and equip disciples of Jesus Christ.

As we move toward Lent, we’ll also enter a season of repentance—turning from sin, idols, and anything that keeps us from deep union with God. Repentance isn’t about shame; it’s about freedom. God is kind, and he invites us to draw closer to him, giving us, by the Holy Spirit, the ability to repent and be filled to overflowing with His love. We seek awakening, and God brings awakening as we humbly return our hearts to Him.

There’s much to celebrate this month. Confirmation Sunday is February 8 at the 10:30 AM service, as 14 students profess their faith and join the church. Ash Wednesday is February 18, with services and the imposition of ashes at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM in the sanctuary.

If you’re longing for depth or a breakthrough, ask yourself: am I walking with someone, or helping someone else not walk alone? Is my heart clear with God—does anything stand in the way? Let’s lean into this season together. We are positioning ourselves for deep sanctification and missional empowerment so that we might see God bring our vision to life: To offer Christ from the heart of downtown for an awakening in Southwest Georgia.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jim



*Ash
Wednesday*

FEBRUARY 18
NOON & 6:00 PM
IN THE SANCTUARY

Our Church Staff

Jim Morrow
Laurel Griffith
Sylvia Broadaway
Lisa Christenson
Jessica Clawson
Ashlee Crawford
Leah George
Aaron Goudy
Karyl Harris
Becky Herndon

Senior Minister
Associate Minister of Discipleship
Hospitality Coordinator
Administrative Assistant, Finance/Business Office
Administrative Assistant
Director of Preschool
Business Manager Administration and Facilities
Custodian
Administrative Asst. - Sr. Min., Assoc. Min., & Membership
Administrative Assistant

Zerike Jones
Brandon Keaton
Emma Keaton
Amanda Morrow
Angela Oliver
Kallie Rutledge
Allison Vandenberg
Scott Wood
Kelvin Works
Jackie Yielding

Custodian
Director of Music & Student Ministries
Ministry Assistant
Children’s Assistant
Director of Food Services
Digital Media & Technology Specialist
Director of Children’s Ministries
Facilities Manager
Maintenance Supervisor
Director of Missions and Outreach

February Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

As we step into February, let us remember the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. Remind us of Galatians 5:1, *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."*

We humbly ask that You open doors of opportunity and divine favor. Break the physical, mental, and spiritual bonds that the enemy uses to keep us from You.

Cleanse us and raise us up to live in the liberty of Christ. Lord, as President's Day approaches, we pray that our leaders will center on serving and glorifying God, following Jesus' example of humility and compassion rather than worldly power.

We thank You for our children and youth. As we enter Confirmation season and winter events, we pray that You will meet their every need. We pray no weapon formed against them will prosper. Guide us in how to care for them and raise them to be who You called them to be.

Ephesians 3:18-19 tells us how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love is. It transcends all knowledge and understanding. It gives us the power to live a life full of purpose, hope, and joy. For you have given us a true Valentine that will never fade or die.

Tina Marbury

Bereavement Meal Team:

The purpose of the Bereavement Meal Team is to lovingly and consistently care for families of church members who pass away and church members who experience the loss of an immediate family member. The Bereavement Meal Team also provides a meal on the day of the funeral for the family. For more information about the Bereavement Meal Team, please contact Head Coach, Beth O'Brien at bethobrien@gmail.com.

Congregational Care

Congratulations on the Birth of

- David Wells Cravey, son of David and Lacey Cravey on December 12, 2025. Grandmother is Mary Ann Cravey.

We Celebrate the Baptism of

- Blair Ann Reese, daughter of Zach and Caitlyn Reese on Sunday, December 21, 2025.

Christian Sympathy Is Extended to

- the family of Leslie Pritchett.
- the family of Phil Gresham.
- the family of Darlene Muse.
- Allison Vandenberg in the death of her aunt, Kay Ramey.
- James Ashcraft in the death of his sister, Dianne Brookins.
- Jeremy Morey in the death of his father, Larry Morey.
- Mark Mitchell in the death of his sister, Connie Lightfoot.

Prayer Requests

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:15

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| • Cecil | • Banks Margeson |
| • Roy Barksdale | • Bob Morrow |
| • Emory Beane | • Gina Newberry |
| • Jim Blessen | • Ray Pillar |
| • Alicia Carlsson | • Mary Ramsey |
| • Pam Dykes | • Holley Vildibill |
| • Shiree Goudy | • Jeanette |
| • Beverly Hamrick | • Weathersby |
| • Mr. & Mrs. Holley | • Wes Westbrook |
| • Wayne Hooks | |

Prayer requests may be given to the church by using the Prayer Request Card in our worship areas or by calling the church office (229-432-7407). Please re-submit your prayer request by the 15th of each month if continued prayer is needed.

Prayer Chain - Our prayer chain passes along urgent prayer needs. To activate the Prayer Chain after hours, contact: Molly Strickland, [229-343-3011](tel:229-343-3011).

Minister on Call (after hours & weekends) - To reach the Minister on Call after hours and on weekends, call [229-733-1075](tel:229-733-1075).

MEMORIALS: JANUARY 2025

Given to **Memorial Maintenance Trust Fund**

in memory of Judy Varnell by

*Patsy Martin

in memory of Darlene Muse by

*Carolyn Griffin

Given to **Emergency Aid-Altar Fund**

in memory of Bill Clark by

*Ron and Lavonne Pavlik

*by friends

in memory of Phil Gresham by

*J.M. and Wylene Yielding

*Tom Liner

*Patsy Martin

*Billie Mitchell

in honor of Carol Marbury by

*Carlos and Sheila Phillips

in honor of Tina Marbury,

in honor of Brian Marbury by

*John and Carol Marbury

Given to **Littleton Sunday School Class**

in memory of Joy Harrison by

*Charlie and Ann Plunkett

*Suzanne MacIntosh

*Littleton Sunday School Class

*Janet Mills

*Dolly Jones

*Donna Keel

*Patsy Martin

*Rosalyn Forsyth

in memory of Bob Wallace by

*Rosalyn Forsyth

*Joyce Espy

Given to **Christmas Offering**

in honor of Gail Williams,

in honor of Tim Yates,

in honor of Ellen Harris,

in honor of Marie Manning,

in honor of Lee Palmer by

*GA Cochran Sunday School Class

in memory of Millie Neal Page by

*GA Cochran Sunday School Class

*Parks Jones

in memory of Robert W. (Bob) Smith by

*Carlisle and Barbara Metts

in memory of Gleaton Jones by

*Parks Jones

in memory of Frances C. Watkins by

*Bill E. Bowles, Sr.

Given to **J. Deming Whiting Scholarship Fund**

in honor of Carol Marbury by

*Carlos and Sheila Phillips

Given to **Children's Ministry**

in memory of Bill Clark by

*Tom and Tricia Marshall

Given to **Camp Kirksey**

in honor of John Marbury,

in honor of Felix Marbury,

in honor of Jimmy Phillips by

*Carlos and Sheila Phillips

in honor of Carlos and Sheila Phillips by

*Felix and Carol Marbury

Given to **Dementia Support Center**

in memory of Bill Clark by

*Billie Mitchell

in memory of Kay Humphries by

*Larry and Karen Lovett Anderson

in honor of Lori Askey by

*Nancy Askey

Given to **Hosanna Choir Fund**

in memory of Millie Neal Page by

*Jeff and Lillie Sinyard

Given to **Kairos Prison Ministry**

in memory of Bill Wilson by

*Dee and Layne Cox

Given to **Miracle Meals**

in memory of Bill Clark by

*Bob and Cathy Revell

in memory of Phil Gresham by

*Patsy Martin

*Billie Mitchell

*Al Algiers

*Rosalyn Forsyth

Given to **The Anchorage**

in honor of Felix and Carol Marbury by

*John and Carol Marbury

Given to **Sunday Evening With our Neighbors**

in memory of Phil Gresham by

*J.M. and Wylene Yielding

Given to **Operating Fund**

in memory of Phil Gresham by

*Patsy Martin

MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP REPORT

If you have any questions or would like to speak to someone regarding a donation, please call Leah George or Lisa Christenson at 229-432-7407.

YTD Income:	\$ 1,694,455.98
Prior Year:	\$ 1,641,909.61
YTD Budget:	\$ 1,875,937.14

YTD Expenses:	\$ 1,811,266.60
Prior Year:	\$ 1,736,745.13
YTD Budget:	\$ 1,875,937.14





Special Christmas Offering Update

We had two beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve services. All the offering from those services went to our special Christmas Offering for missions. Thank you to all who contributed on Christmas Eve and during the weeks before and after Christmas. We received \$ 33,435.00 – more than double our goal. I am blown away by your generosity and know that each recipient ministry will be immeasurably blessed.

With great thanksgiving,
Jackie

Come serve with us: SEWN Facilitator

If you've been looking for a way to serve or are just curious about our Sunday Evening with Our Neighbors (SEWN) mission, come serve with us! Our Sunday evening meal has been going on in various forms for more than 18 years. It is a thriving partnership of First Methodist and many other churches and community groups. We're looking for 3-5 more Sewn Facilitators willing to serve once a quarter for about 2 hours or less each time. The main role of the facilitator is to assist the church or community group who will be serving the meal. We are blessed to have so many regular and long-standing partner organizations and your service as a facilitator is an important part of cultivating and sustaining these relationships. For more information, contact Jackie Yielding at the email address below.

Jackie Yielding
Director of Missions and Outreach
jyielding@firstmethodistalbany.com

Northside Elementary Easter Egg Hunt: Thursday March 19th

Even though it's just February, it's time to start preparing for our Partners in Excellence Easter Egg Hunt at Northside Elementary School. This is a great day of outreach, learning, and play. Please help us make this a special day for the students and teachers by donating individually wrapped candy of your choice that we will use to fill the eggs. We have all the plastic eggs we need on hand. We will also need volunteers to help fill the eggs and to serve on the day of the egg hunt. Last year's event was so much fun and we're so grateful for all your generous donations and service! You may drop off your candy at the mission baskets near Walden Chapel and the Sanctuary or the church office. To help fill eggs and/or serve at the egg hunt, please contact Jackie Yielding at the email address below.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING FOR FEBRUARY:

- 2/1 – Miracle Meals**
Miracle Meals allows church volunteers to deliver "miracle meals" to special seniors and others isolated at home. This is a wonderful ministry that not only provides physical nourishment but also a warm, weekly connection.
- 2/8 – Strive to Thrive**
Strive to Thrive is a life-changing initiative to bring community support and resources to people who desire to get out of poverty.
- 2/15 –The Lord's Pantry**
The Lord's Pantry provides free groceries, clothing, and spiritual encouragement to the impoverished in Dougherty County and the surrounding areas.
- 2/22– Altar Fund**
The Altar Fund is First Methodist's benevolence fund from which we meet a variety of needs including our weekly Sunday Evening with Our Neighbors (SEWN) meal.

DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

You can sign up at the table located near the church office or online at www.firstmethodistalbany.com/adults

NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS FOR NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

Join us for a new Sunday School class designed for newlyweds and those beginning their parenting journey. We will enjoy coffee and conversation, and you will have the opportunity to meet others who are interested in this new opportunity. If you are looking for meaningful friendships and relevant Bible study, make Sunday school a priority in the new year. Nursery available but infants are welcome.

SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM
Location: Sapp Conference Room
Facilitators: Todd and Lauren Ray

Single Focus: A Class for Young Professionals

Announcing a new class for single adults focused on Bible study, meaningful conversation, and accountable friendships. Join us as we grow in faith and fellowship together.

SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM
Facilitator: Mark Shoemaker
Location: Room 3-220

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

DIVINE DESIGN: You were designed by God for a purpose. Join us for this six-week interactive study where we will explore how our spiritual gifts, our passions, and our stories intersect to determine our unique personal calling.
TUESDAYS AT 10:30 AM
Facilitator: Rev. Laurel Griffith
Location: Sapp Conference Room

MIDWEEK: WEDNESDAYS AT 6:00 PM

- MAKE ROOM**
Facilitator: Sylvia Broadaway
Location: Conference Room B
- MARRIAGE MATTERS:**
Facilitators: Rev. Jim Morrow & Rev. Laurel Griffith
Location: Sapp Conference Room
Marriage Workshop: Friday evening February 20
Saturday morning, February 21
Cost: \$35.00 per couple
- BUILDING AND EQUIPPING DISCIPLES:**
Facilitator: Glenn Clack
Location: Conference Room A



Men's Fellowship @ Camp Kirksey! Join the men of our church for fellowship and a meal together on **Thursday, February 12.** Supper is served at 6:00 PM, but come as early as 5:30 PM to hang out around the grill. Make your reservation by noon on **February 10.**



MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Mondays from 6-7:30 PM
Sapp Conference Room

Join Brandon this winter as he dives into Romans 9-16. Dinner, fellowship, & meaningful Bible study included!

FIRST METHODIST TRIVIA QUIZ:

From your Church Archivists/Historians: Gordon & Meri Beth—(answers on the bottom of the page.)

Verification of answers can be found by a visit to the Historical Room.

1. What is significant about the trees on the 16 acres at Camp Kirksey?
2. What person who served as pastor in 1921 shares his name with a novella written by Herman Melville?

MIDWEEK MENU:

FEBRUARY 4: SOUP-ER BOWL NIGHT! Soup, Grilled Cheese, and Salad

FEBRUARY 11: Mexican Night - Tacos, black beans, rice, and corn.

FEBRUARY 18: Smoked chicken, potato salad, baked beans, and rolls.

FEBRUARY 25: Fried fish, cheese grits, coleslaw, and fried okra.

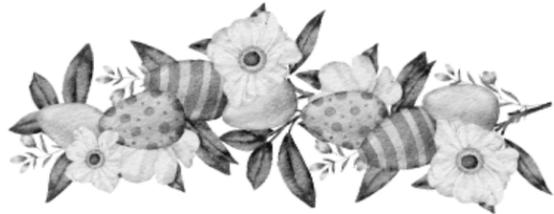
MIDWEEK SUPPER PRICES:

Adult: \$8.00, Kids' Meal: \$5.00 (12 & under)

PLUS: Entrée Salad Bar option each week and "Grab n' Go" kids' options available until 6:15 PM!

Music Ministry

NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO JOIN THE SANCTUARY CHOIR!



JOIN US AS WE PREPARE FOR THE SEASON OF LENT AND EASTER SUNDAY. MEET US ON WEDNESDAYS AT 5:30PM FOR THE LADIES ENSEMBLE AND AT 6:00PM FOR CHOIR PRACTICE.

Congratulations to our 2026 Confirmands!

Mitchell Albrecht	Wilkes Parrish
Charlie Campbell	Jake Paschal
Emma Duren	Cate Revell
Nobie Fountain	Mallory Toole
Lilia Gray	Bowen Willcox
Grace Haire	Birdie Wilson
Robert Haire	Henry Wright
Ellison Palaima	Millen Wright



Brandon's Travel Club

Discover ancient ruins, local foods, and coastal views across the Italian peninsula. Join Brandon in November 2026 as he explores Rome, Sorrento, Florence, & Venice. For more info, scan this QR code.

TRIVIA ANSWERS: 1) For South Georgia, they are significant because they are a rare large stand of longleaf pines 2) William Henry "Billy" Budd



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS) This summer, we are going to have a fun, memorable week where kids will grow in their faith as they experience Paul in ROME! Registration opens in April.

Ages: 4 yrs (potty trained) - Rising 6th Graders | **Dates:** June 8-12 | **Times:** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

SUMMER CAMP Register your current 3rd – 5th grader for Elementary Camp Session 1 at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. This will be a week filled with non-stop fun activities and opportunities to grow closer to Christ through daily worship, Bible study, and fellowship. Campers will enjoy the beach, boat rides, a bonfire, art, games galore, hilarious morning shows, and evenings of camp-wide games and worship. Transportation is provided to and from the island. **Register your child here:** <https://sgaumc-reg.brtaapp.com/elem12026> Please let Allison know when you register your camper! Transportation to and from camp will be provided by the church. **Dates:** July 6-10 | **Cost:** \$525 **Grades:** Rising 3rd – Rising 6th Graders | **Location:** Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island

Allison Vandenberg, Director of Children's Ministries
avandenberg@firstmethodistalbany.com



FEBRUARY IS AN EXCITING MONTH AT FIRST METHODIST PRESCHOOL!

One of our spring fundraisers will kick off on February 2 and run through March 2. More details will be coming soon—stay tuned!

We are also thrilled to share that we will host our first-ever Open House on February 22 from 2:00–3:00 PM. Come tour our sweet school and see why First Methodist Preschool could be a special part of your family.

Pre-registration for the upcoming school year will begin on February 23 for current preschool families and church members. Open registration for the public will begin on March 3.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers as we look forward to all God has in store this season.

"LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE." 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

Ashlee Crawford, Director of Preschool
acrawford@firstmethodistalbany.com



THRIVE YOUTH

Check out our social media and register for trips at bit.ly/m/thrivestudents!

Connect with us on **Sundays from 4:00-6:00PM** in the Youth Center. Join us for devotions, small groups, snack supper, and a group activity. More info below!

Thank you for all your support during our Hosanna Missions Auction Dinner on January 29th. We are so excited for our annual Universal Orlando Retreat from February 13th-16th. Pray for us as we take 72 students to Orlando for a long weekend of fun!

UPCOMING THIS FEBRUARY:

- FEBRUARY 1** - EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY PARTY
- FEBRUARY 8** - CONFIRMATION SUNDAY - SUPER BOWL PARTY
- FEBRUARY 13-16** - UNIVERSAL ORLANDO TRIP
- FEBRUARY 15** - NO PM ACTIVITIES
- FEBRUARY 22** - MISSIONS NIGHT



Brandon Keaton, Director of Music & Student Ministries
bkeaton@firstmethodistalbany.com