

Please join us for worship.
Midway Kids: 10:30
Worship: 10:30

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Calendar

Sundays —
Women’s Bible Study 5:00 p.m.
Midway Students 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Mondays — **6:30 p.m.**
Boy Scout Troop 68

Tuesdays—
Prayer Ministry—1:30 p.m.
Men’s Bible Study 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays —
Midway Hotel Lunch—Noon
Choir Rehearsal — 6:29 p.m.

Thursdays — **9-4:00**
Sewcial open sewing
Yoga at 9:00
1st and 3rd—Twice Blessed
Open Noon to 5 p.m.

Tuesday, February 10
Second Tuesday Lunch — Noon
Prayer Ministry — 1:30

February 13-16
Midway Students Ski Trip

February 19—Noon to 5:00
Twice Blessed

February 20 — 6 p.m.
Bingo Bonanza
Family Fun Night

**Lent: A Season of
Remembering and Renewal**

Each year, the Church enters a sacred season known as Lent, a forty-day journey of prayer, fasting, repentance, and spiritual preparation as we move toward Easter. Lent is not a season of hurry, noise, or distraction. It is an intentional slowing down. A time to remember and return. A time to prepare our hearts to walk with Christ toward the cross, and ultimately, the empty tomb.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, when ashes mark our foreheads as a sign of humility and repentance. From there, the season unfolds as a time of self-examination and renewal, inviting us to let go of what distracts us from God and to make room again for prayer and faithful obedience. While Sundays are not counted among the forty days, the season itself carries us all the way to Holy Thursday, when we remember Christ’s passion and crucifixion.

Christians across traditions, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, have long practiced Lent as a way of aligning their lives more closely with the life of Jesus. Many choose to fast, give something up, or take on a spiritual discipline during this season as preparation. Lent asks us a simple but searching question: What needs to be stripped away so that Christ might be more clearly seen in us?

This year, our Lenten journey will focus on God’s covenants, the promises that reveal who God is and how He faithfully relates to His people across generations. Beginning February 22, we will walk through the great covenant moments of Scripture:

- God’s covenant with Noah, a promise of mercy and preservation
- God’s covenant with Abraham, a promise of blessing and faith
- God’s covenant with Moses, a promise that shapes a holy people
- God’s covenant with David, a promise of a lasting kingdom
- And finally, God’s New Covenant, promised through the prophets and fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Lent reminds us that God’s promises are not fragile. They are not dependent on our perfection. They are rooted in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness and ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

As we enter this season together, may Lent serve as a grace-filled invitation: to repent, to believe, to listen, and to prepare our hearts once again for the Good News of resurrection!



Beyond
the Pulpit

**Pastor
Ben Lee**

Peace,
Ben

Ministries & Missions

GORGEOUS GIRLS

Nothing scheduled at this time. Watch for announcements and read item below.

If someone would like to assume Kathy Koehler's position as coordinator of the group, please contact her. She would like to hand it over to someone in anticipation of her move next spring to Lexington.

Please consider taking over this important responsibility for one of our church's most significant social organizations. Thank you, Kathy for handling it since the creation of the group honoring Leon Brown.

Help needed for our Kids and Sprouts ministries

We are looking for volunteers to serve in Midway Kids and Midway Sprouts from now through May 31st. Please help us fill these spots if you can. What a blessing it would be if they were all filled this week.

Thank you for supporting our children's ministry here at Midway Locust Grove Church. For questions, please contact Point Person Shayla Roop, 573 - 406 - 4349 or at sroop@cpsk12.org.

TREASURY NOTES

By Kelley Frink

2025 Tax Statements are ready! If we have an email on file for you, you should have already received an email with a link to download your statement. If you did not receive, we have a copy available for you at the church. We will not be mailing statements this year. If you need a copy of your statement or have any questions, please contact Barb Harville at moharvillefamily@aol.com or Kelley Frink at kelley.m.frink@gmail.com. Thank you for your continued support of MLG!

Our Ronald McDonald House team continues to provide hospital meals

We started off the year at Ronald McDonald House very busy this month. We were scheduled to pack lunches on the 6th. We found out that they had no one scheduled for supper that night. Through our Mission Committee we were able to donate pizza that night. Thank you all that donate and volunteer to our Missions committee.

Later on January 19 I received a call that there had been a "mix-up" with the scheduling and there was no one scheduled to pack lunches the next day. So in true Midway Locust Grove fashion after an email and a few phone calls we had it covered. We packed 100 lunches to be delivered to the families staying with their children in the hospitals in our town. The Ronald McDonald House is so appreciative of our volunteering and ability to help when called upon. We are all so blessed. Next time to pack lunches and serve the evening meal is February 24. God is good!!

Happy Birthday

February 2026

If someone's name does not appear here and they do have a birthday this month, please let us know by email and we will update our records.

1 Lee Sommer	11 James Roberts	14 Steve Luetjen	20 Clay Moore
6 Jessica Martin	13 Jill Walker	14 LeeAnn Martin	(Email only)
8 Bill Wegener	14 Emma Klaas	15 Abigail Gessling	20 Robyn Kaufman
8 Missy Barnes	14 Jaxyn Moore	16 Rena Crane	23 Karla Sommer
11 Flo Praiswater	14 Wick Lee	16 Teagan Groh	24 Huyen Le

Those of us who have been to Re-Member are already getting excited about this year's trip. It is looking like we will be going the second or third week of September this year.

We already have a list of church family members interested in learning more. We start meeting monthly as a group in the spring to discuss the trip and expectations, and begin bonding as a travel group. It is a casual potluck evening full of fun and fellowship.

ON THE REZ

By Kathy Hughes

If you are interested in exploring more about this life-altering week of immersion into Lakota culture let Kathy Hughes or Mariea Caruthers know and we will be sure to add you to the list for the potlucks.

The Re-Member web site is a good place to start learning about Re-Member, and the group gatherings are a good place to get your questions answered. It is a fun week of hard work, education, laughter and connection. We hope you'll consider joining the group this year!!

Second Tuesday Lunch

February 10

- Tuesday, February 10th - 12:00 p.m.- The entree will be ham & beans. - Program by Como Craft Collective. Point Person: Barb Harville, moharvillefamily@aol.com.

March 10

Heads up for March 10 — the program will be a quilt show. If you have a special quilt please feel free to bring it. Contact Barb Harville, moharvillefamily@aol.com or Beth Luetjen, bestlutjen@gmail.com.



Getting to know you

With the recent and continuing growth of our congregation, it seemed a good idea to revive a feature from earlier years of Locust Leaves. We will feature someone in each month's issue, alternating new and longtime members. Thanks to LeeAnn Martin for coordinating the series.

Leslie and Ron Utterback

The Utterbacks are among the very active members of Locust Grove Church. When you learn more about their lives, *activity* is no surprise.

Ron and Leslie were married January 29, 1969, in AP Green Chapel at the University of Missouri. Their first home was on Route J, rent free in exchange for cattle care as they finished their final semester at Mizzou.

As Leslie describes it, they were poor and ate a lot of wild rabbit that Ron killed and prepared. They moved to a basement apartment next to the Little General, then moved out of the area, to Clarence, MO to manage an MFA store. From there, they moved to Macon for another MFA management position, then back to Midway and old friends.

Leslie returned to Mizzou to earn her second degree, a Masters of Fine Art, truly a family accomplishment.

Throughout Ron's career with MFA Incorporated, he received several commendations from the associates he and MFA worked with, supporting the state's farmers. He retired from MFA as a vice president.

Their Locust Grove experience comes in two parts. Leslie was raised as a Presbyterian in Greensboro, NC.; Ron was a Baptist from Hannibal, MO. After moving back to Midway in the '80s, they joined Locust Grove where their youngest daughters were active in the youth group for years. They



lapsed their attendance until five years ago and are now enjoying their church again.

Their children: Margaret, 04/10/1972, lives in Laramie, WY, small business owner; Kirk, 05/02/1973, lives in Columbia, MO, small business owner; Malinda, 07/23/1980, lives in Noosa, Australia, manages her husband's private PT practice; Martha, 01/17/1984, lives in Lees summit, MO, she is a Child Life Specialist at Childrens Mercy hospital. There are eight grandchildren, ages 11 to 21, Campbell, Lucy, Abner, Emily, Ellie, Lizzy, Mitchell, and Spencer.

Leslie's activity/hobby includes art, painting and pastel, quilting, reading (recently reading lots of historical mysteries, and Donna Leon and Louise Penny series). Ron prefers outdoor activities as hunting, gardening, fishing and reading action and conspiracy themes as in Baldacchi, and C.J. Box.

Leslie sums it up: "But truly our proudest moments are seeing the kind adults our children have become and knowing how blessed we are to have grandchildren who are also, kind, loving, funny young adults! And the fact that they actually want to come HOME!"

We need to mention a couple more special activities by the couple. Leslie uses her artist skills to design and prepare the magnificent backdrops for special events in the sanctuary; and Ron arranges for Santa Claus to visit the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall during Christmas worship.

Your Prayer Team:

When you sign your name in the attendance book located on each pew, there is a card for prayer requests. Those prayer requests if not for Ben Lee only, are sent to our Midway Locust Grove Prayer Team. We are a team of 20 prayer warriors who have dedicated time every day for a month, to pray for those requests. Requests can also be given to any of the 20 prayer warriors any day of the week.

We as a team are committed to keep your requests confidential. We pray for each requests every day for one month unless specified to be on the lists longer. We gain joy when we are kept informed on prayer outcomes such as successful surgeries, or changes being prayed about. We love seeing God working through answered prayers.

We want our church family to feel confident about putting their requests in the hands of people who genuinely care and pray fervently. If anyone feels lead to join us on the prayer team, just let me know at preusm54@hotmail.com.

Those on the team are: Gene Baumann, Leslie Durrant, Bob and Suzi Moore, Karla Sommer, Margaret and John Preus, Kathy Hughes, Lou Pegues, Ben Lee, Belinda Thompson, Jim and Glenna Johnson, LeeAnn Martin, Karen Moore, Catherine Shanahan, Angie Gerzen, Laura and David Weaver, and Amy Gutel.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions you may have.

It is our pleasure to serve our church family in this way.

Margaret Preus

A Toasty Time At January Lunch

Glenn and Barb Gregory shared their huge collection of historic toasters for the group at the January Second Tuesday Lunch.



Update on Midway Locust Grove Cemetery

By Kevin Yaeger, Cemetery Committee Chair

Midway Locust Grove Cemetery rests peacefully on a rolling hill in Midway, Missouri — one of the region's most iconic rural church and cemetery settings. The first recorded burial dates back to 1835, marking it as one of the area's earliest resting places. Among those interred are early settlers who helped shape Midway and Boone County, as well as Native Americans whose presence reminds us of the land's long and layered history.

Generations of families have cared for this sacred ground, ensuring it remains both beautiful and accessible. The cemetery's well-kept road doubles as a welcoming walking path, offering a peaceful setting for reflection. While mowing remains the cemetery's largest ongoing expense, its well-managed savings ensure many years of continued upkeep.

Looking to the future, the cemetery board and community share the goal of replacing the current fence — an improvement that will further preserve this historic site and honor those who rest within its boundaries.

Midway Locust Grove Cemetery stands not just as a burial place, but as a living record of the community's heritage — a quiet landmark that honors the past while welcoming all who seek solace in its peaceful landscape.



The Village of Locust Grove

By Gene Baumann

I worked on a tour book of Boone County cemeteries for the county historical society, and in my research I decided to do an extended report of our own cemetery here at Locust Grove. Here are some excerpts from that for you newer members here to bring you up to date on our village.

Back in 2017 we decided to refer to the cemetery as our village. The Village of Locust Grove is a fairly small town, a quiet place with between 700 and 800 residents, and sits a few miles west of Columbia in Boone County.

By other standards, it is one of the oldest communities in the county, and is made up of families large and small, but all connected to each other, either as blood relatives or simply as good neighbors. The really unique thing about the village is that no one ever grows older there.

As with all communities, there are many stories to be told, some heartwarming, some heart-rending. Here are some of those stories, probably not unlike the stories which you would find in any other small community.

The first resident in the village was Manwaring "Warren" Leonard, who took up residence in 1835. The Leonard family attracted others into the village, and as the Leonard daughters married, long family histories were born, the Westlakes and Hendersons being prominent village families. Two residents of the village moved in following a devastating tornado passing through the area. Hattie Haun moved in, leaving her husband, William, to rebuild the total destruction of their property; he joined her four years later. Dr. Roy Douglas moved in the same time as Mrs. Haun. His wife, Annie, also a doctor, joined him in the village nine years later. The Douglases love to tell stories of the tornado. Annie was blown 200 yards into a field clutching her baby in her arms. Both suffered only minor bruises.

There is a large group of the McMickle family in the village. One, James B. McMickle, served on a coroner's jury which convicted four Federal soldiers in 1863, for the hanging death of Martin Oldham, who lived in this area. The troops invaded Oldham's home at 10:00 one night, forced all the guests to leave, then took Oldham to a

nearby tree and hanged him, leaving his body lying on the ground.

Elizabeth Redman may be the closest thing to a celebrity in the village. At the age of 10, she was in the cast of the play, "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater the night Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth. Although only 10 years old at the time she clearly recalls the excitement following the tragedy.

Sallie Shadrick is the oldest person to move into the village at age 107. She and her husband, Lemiel, had 11 children. Sallie smoked a corn-cob pipe for 101 years, but stopped when she moved into the village, and can read without using glasses.

Perhaps the finest residence in the village is that of Alfred Houghten Hart and his wife, Albinia. Mr. Hart is the great-grandson of John Hart, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Their only son, William Stout Hart and his wife Julia, live nearby, and expanded the Hart family firmly into the history of the area. William operated Hart Store for many years, the center of activity in the area. One of his daughters, who lives in Columbia, is the namesake of Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School.

The largest family group in the village bear the Jacobs name. It all started with Greenberry Jacobs, the first of that name in Boone County, a veteran of the War of 1812.

There are two unoccupied residences in the village, and many vacant lots for growth. The two empty residences are those of Reuben Hatton, who remains on his farm near the village, and Captain James Blair Watson, who remains in Lone Jack, Mo, near Kansas City

Folks continue to move into the Village of Locust Grove; as the population increases, so does the number of visitors, many of whom are keeping an eye out for their future residence.

It's easy to find; just look for the little white church on the hill in Midway. Or just step out the front door of the sanctuary and look to your left. Take as much time as you like; you may discover your own favorite story.

Save the Date!

Give Back Day-Spring Church Clean Up -

Saturday, March 14th -

Point Person: Leslie Brown

brownie1262@hotmail.com

BINGO



BANANZA

Join us for our February Fun & Fellowship Night! Pizza, BINGO, prizes, and an all around good time!

FRIDAY, FEB. 20TH

6:00 PM - Locust Grove Church

Invite your friends and neighbors!





Ministry Council Update

By Jerry Wirth

The Ministry Council met on January 19, and I wanted to share a few highlights as we continue moving forward together.

One significant conversation centered on our search for a Director of Student Ministries. After a limited response to the part-time posting, the Council approved reposting the position as full-time to attract a broader pool of candidates. The salary range for this role is already included in the 2026 budget, with final compensation based on experience and qualifications. If you know someone who may be a good fit, please reach out to Jesse Kempf. We're also grateful for the extensive employee policy manual the Pastor-Parish Committee has been developing, which is currently under review.

We also discussed several behind-the-scenes updates. The 2026 budget information appears in this edition of *Locust Leaves*, and in 2026, we will fully transition to Realm as our primary church management system. This shift will allow us to simplify operations and integrate giving, communication, and record-keeping in one place. Recent emailed giving statements were generated through Realm.

On the facilities side, additional foundation support was completed in the sanctuary, and maintenance continues at the Transformation Housing home. A special thank you to Perry Leutkemeyer and Dan Mieves for the generous time and effort they invested in preparing the home for new occupants.

Sunday morning worship continues to be encouraging. Attendance remains steady across worship and children's ministries. Please note that our next Fifth Sunday service will actually be held on the **fourth** Sunday of March (March 22), as Palm Sunday falls on the fifth Sunday.

Midway Kids has seen positive momentum with the recent shift to two age groups, with older children now meeting in the youth space downstairs for the teaching portion of the programming. Feedback from both kids and volunteers has been overwhelm-

ingly positive. This model requires additional volunteers, but the role is simple: being present, helping children find Bible passages, and offering support. Couples are especially encouraged to consider serving together. Sign-ups are available through the Gather, Grow, and Go wall and the Monday Morning Map.

In student ministry, 17 students and 6 adults are registered for the Midway Students Ski Retreat to West Virginia! Their Sunday evening attendance continues to average 15–18 students.

Our missions ministries remain active, with Give Back Days scheduled through July, ongoing meals at the Ronald McDonald House, and Buddy Packs continuing at Midway Elementary. Details are available in the Monday Morning Map.

Looking ahead, we continue planning toward two worship services beginning in September, pending the Director of Student Ministries' hiring timeline. Ben also plans to introduce an annual State of the Church gathering, titled "*Where We've Been, Where We're Headed*," to be held one Sunday evening before Easter. This will be a church wide town hall-style conversation about our life together.

Thank you to all who serve so faithfully here at Midway Locust Grove. As our ministries grow, so do opportunities to help, especially in Sunday morning worship, Midway Kids, the A/V booth, and on Communion Sundays. If you're considering serving, now is a great time to step in and get connected. Please reach out to a committee chair, Council member, or Ben with any questions. In my experience, serving always gives back more than it takes.

— Jerry Wirth
Administrative Ministry Council Chair



The Kitchen Cabinet

Remembering
Mary Kaye's
Food Ministry

Happy Valentine's Day. Make these delicious brownies for your sweetheart!

Enjoy,

Hope Burkart

Speedy Brownies

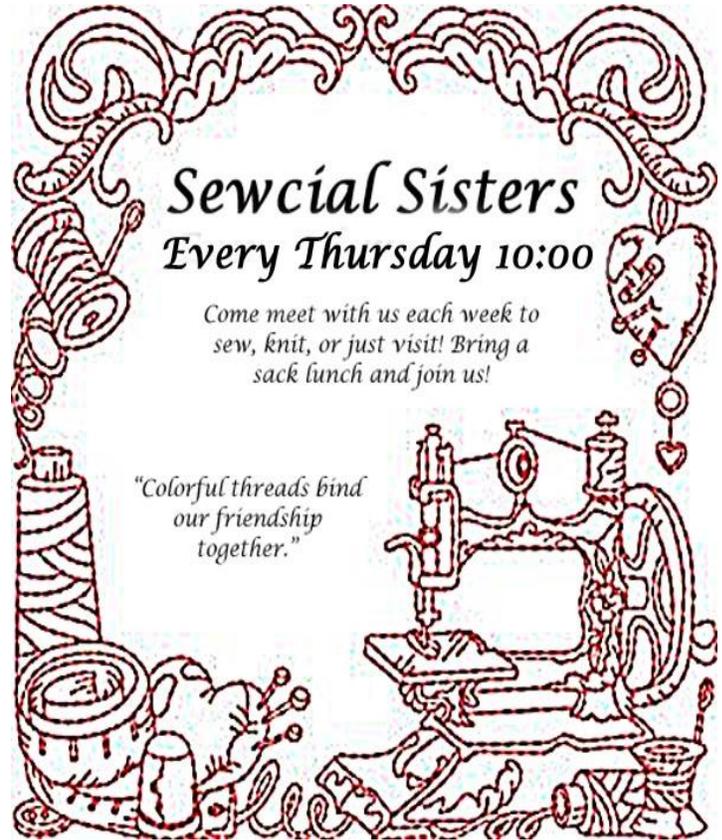
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 5 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- Powdered sugar

Mix first six ingredients. Beat well and pour into 8x8 cake pan lined with parchment paper,

Sprinkle with chocolate chips and dust with powdered sugar.

Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until

J



Secret Sisters Quilt Show

At March 10 Tuesday Lunch

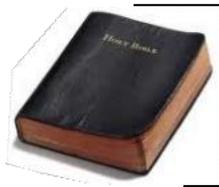
We invite members of our church to be a part of the 2nd Tuesday lunch Quilt Show in March.

We will set up quilts in the Sanctuary on Monday the 9th of March. Bring your favorites to show off. Beth Luetjen

**Join us for
Second Tuesday Lunch
February 10 Noon
in the
Fellowship
Hall.
Bring a dish
and a friend .**







Basic necessities free of charge
to those temporarily in need

Midway Locust Grove
United Methodist Church

Open February 5, 19

**Twice
blessed**

Open 1st & 3rd Thursdays
12:00 – 5:00

The little white building
on the corner of
Henderson and Locust Grove Church Road





MIDWAY LOCUST GROVE CHURCH

2600 N. Locust Grove Church Road
Columbia, MO 65202

Pastor: Rev. Ben Lee
Administrative Assistant: Catherine Shanahan
Church phone: 573-445-4667
Pastor's cell phone: 478-447-4438
Email: mwlocustgrove@gmail.com
Email: blee.mwlocustgrove@gmail.com
Facebook: @mwlocustgrove
YouTube: mwlocustgrove
Instagram: @mwlocustgrove

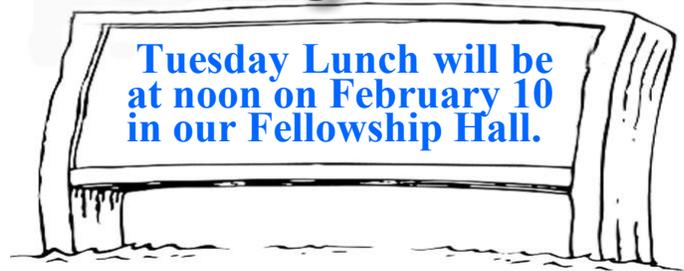
***Our Mission:
We exist to
gather in grace,
grow in Christ,
and go share the Gospel.***

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Find the hidden Bi-  ble in this
Visit our Web Site: www.mwlocustgrove.com

Volume 39 Issue 2 February 2026

**If we had a
Message Board...**



The Back Row By Gene Baumann

I heard an interesting story last week that has had me thinking. I know what my belief is, but was intrigued by the question in the story, which I heard from a mutual friend.

The subject, also a longtime friend of mine, asked the question, "Does Satan answer prayers?" My immediate response was, "I don't think so, why did he ask?"

He told about his wife being in the hospital about 10 years or so ago, supposedly on her death bed. In his desperation, he prayed for her recovery. He prayed to God, to Jesus, and to Satan.

I am not aware of his faith uncertainty but feel he had two chances against one that his wife would survive, which she did for a number of years before passing.

February 2026

I never had considered the possibility of Satan answering prayers, because I could not imagine anyone asking. If nothing else, this story reminds me to not judge others by my own beliefs.

I have not visited with him about this, so do not know his feelings, but after all these years it apparently is still on his mind. That planted it on my mind, to find him an answer he could live with.

There is an abundance of opinions on the Internet, which I do not consider a totally reliable source for any topic. It does include a lot of Bible references which would be helpful to my friend if he were inclined to go there. My reason for sharing this story is to plant the unusual question for you to ponder. I think I know your answer and mine are the same; let's ask God and Jesus for their help for my friend.