

# Locust Leaves

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, January 13

Second Tuesday Lunch — Noon  
Prayer Ministry — 1:30

### January 15—Noon to 5:00

Twice Blessed

### January 24 — 6 p.m.

Give Back Day at  
City of Refuge

### January 26 — 11:00 a.m.

Gorgeous Girls  
At Just Love Coffee Café

## Fundamentals

### A Six-Week Gospel Primer

As we begin a new year together, we are turning our attention to what matters most.



Beyond  
the Pulpit

Pastor  
Ben Lee

Starting January 4, we will walk through a six-week sermon series called Fundamentals, a clear, beautiful and hopeful exploration of the core truths of the Christian faith. This series is designed to ground us again in the Gospel; who God is, who we are, what has gone wrong in the world and what God had done (and is doing) through Jesus Christ.

Our Fundamentals series will be especially meaningful for those who are new to Christianity, those who are curious or seeking, and those who are asking honest questions about faith. At the same time it will be a deeply relevant series for long-time followers of Jesus, reminding us exactly why we gather, why we worship, and why the Gospel still matters in everyday life.

Over these six weeks, we will move carefully and intentionally through Scripture, tracing the story of salvation from humanity's need to God's grace, to the life-changing power of reconciliation in Christ. This is not about learning something new as much as it is about remembering the essential.

Whether you are taking your first steps in a life of faith or have been walking with Christ for decades, our Fundamentals series will invite all of us to return to the Good News that forms us, sustains us, and sends us unto the world with hope.

### Sermon Schedule:

January 4— Fundamentals 1	Mark 1:9-15
January 11 — Fundamentals 2	Romans 3:9-20
January 18 — Fundamentals 3	Romans 3:21-31
January 25 — Fundamentals 4	Ephesians 2:1-10
February 1 — Fundamentals 5	1 Corinthians 15:1-11
February 8 — Fundamentals 6	2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Please come and be reminded, or discover for the first time, what the Christian faith is truly about. I very much look forward to walking through these Fundamentals together with you all.

Peace, *Ben*

# Ministries & Missions

## GORGEOUS GIRLS

**January 26, 2026 —**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Just Love Coffee Cafe**

**Crossroads Shopping Center**

**Email Kathy Koehler**

**if interested;**

The Gorgeous Girls did not meet in November or December. Their next meeting is January 26 as described above. This is a correction from the date shown in last month's Locust Leaves, so please check your calendar.

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.

### **Our Ronald McDonald House team continues to provide hospital meals**

December 5, 2025 found us serving supper at Ronald McDonald House. We had made two kinds of soup and slider sandwiches and cookies for dessert.

On December 12, 2025 we packed lunches to be delivered to hospitals where families are with their children.

Thank you for all the help volunteering and serving. I am looking forward to another great year at the Ronald McDonald House.

## TREASURY NOTES

*By Kelley Frink*

Hard to believe we are already in 2026. Our budget for 2025 was \$295,000. We ended up with \$365,000 in contributions and \$330,000 in expenses. It was a strong financial year for the church.

For 2026, based on the pledge cards provided, our budget is \$400,000. We are changing finance systems in 2026 to one that is specific to church finance. In this transition, you will have online visibility into your donations to MLG if you choose.

This will change where individuals make online contributions, but nothing is changing right now. We will communicate when this will happen in the next few months.

In addition, I am excited to announce our finance committee for 2026. Thank you in advance to Barb Harville, Heather Abrams, Barb Gregory, and Linda Quinley, who have all volunteered to be on the finance team for 2026.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [Kelley Frink at kelley.m.frink@gmail.com](mailto:kelley.m.frink@gmail.com).



# Happy Birthday

## January 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 Trevor Walker    | 9 Shelby Thomas      | 13 Amber Klaas           | 19 Noah Patrick      |
| 4 Craig Butler     | 10 Tim Abrams        | 18 Mary Bess Green       | 23 Andy Strubel      |
| 6 Gabriel Gessling | 10 Marianne Martin   | 18 Jana Wirth            | 25 Devin Rowland     |
| 7 Heather Gessling | 11 Alaina Fuemmeler  | 19 <b>Warren Filbert</b> | 29 Jody Patrick      |
| 7 Daryle Moreau    | 11 Tami Gessling     | 19 Bob Henley            | 29 Steve Baumgartner |
| 8 Bess Henley      | 11 Isabelle Gessling | 19 Kate Johnson          | 29 Jane Ann Lee      |
| 9 Jerry Gerzen     | 12 Julie Hovis-Bader |                          |                      |

### In Memoriam: Warren Filbert — 1-1, 1950—12-15, 2025

Joseph Warren Filbert, 75, a fellow Locust Grove Church member, passed away peacefully in his sleep December 15, 2025.



Warren was born January 19, 1950, in Council Bluffs Iowa, to Warren and Angela (Cruise) Filbert. He graduated from Iowa State University in 1972 with a degree in Forestry. In 1973, he moved to Columbia, Missouri and started driving for United Parcel Service, retiring in 2022 with over 30 years of service.

In 2000, he married Rosalie Dianne (Caspall), who was his faithful partner and companion until her passing in 2025. He was a member of Midway Locust Grove Church and met weekly with the men's Bible study group. He was a wonderful cook and enjoyed creating and serving dishes every Wednesday to those less fortunate as part of the church's Lunch at the Hotel Ministry.

He had many hobbies and interests, including gardening, hunting, fishing and collecting and restoring outboard motors. He was an avid sportsman, traveling extensively to hunt or fish with family and friends. Even with his

diminished health, he was determined to see and experience everything he could. Only months prior to his passing, he took his son on a hunting safari to Africa; and went salmon fishing in Alaska with a longtime friend. He was a charter member of the Perche Creek Yacht Club, Safari International, NRA, and a member of the Great 8 1000 chukar shoot.

He was preceded in death by wife, Dianne Filbert, parents Warren and Angela Filbert, and half-sister Judy Fulkerson. He is survived by son, Ryan Filbert and partner Sylvia Lin of St. Louis, Missouri, grandchildren Tom, Mitchell, and Fisher, and daughter and son-in-law, Renee and Bret Howard of Town & Country, Missouri, and their children, Logan and Brady, his stepson, David Caspall of Columbia, Missouri, brother and sister-in-law, John and Mary Filbert of Council Bluffs, Iowa, niece Meghan (Omar) of LaFarge, Wisconsin and their children Owen and Niles, niece Elizabeth of New York City, and half sister Susie Ball of Kent, Washington.

Services honoring and celebrating Warren's life was January 10, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. at Midway Locust Grove Church, Boone County, Missouri, with inurnment immediately following.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



## 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.*

### **Dwain Hovis**

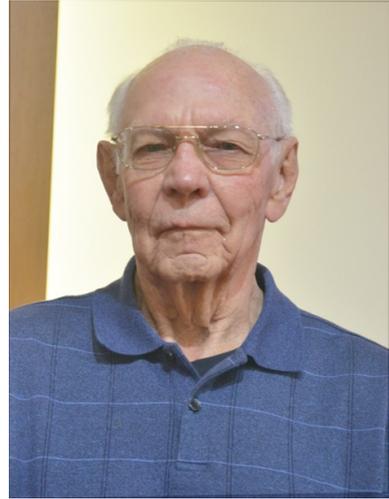
If you were to make a list of the veterans of Locust Grove one of the names near the top of the list would be Dwain Hovis. Extend that list to the Methodist denomination, and there he remains near the top.

Dwain first joined the Methodist Church in Kansas City in the early '70s, then transferred his membership to Locust Grove in 1986 at the urging of his wife, Lonnie, who was attending the church.

They were an active pair of members until Lonnie's passing in October of 2017. They had been married since August 23, 1958.

Dwain's working career somewhat paralleled and benefitted from his church membership. He was Deputy Director of the Missouri Division of Family Services, serving 42 years before retiring.

Dwain has two children, Dean, 66, who lives next door, and Julie, 62, who lives in Macon. There are grandchildren, Logan, Jennifer, Paige, and Brandi; and great-grandchildren, Abigale, Isabella, Anna, Mia, Mikel, Patrick, Bailkey, Jagger and Juniper.



Jennifer, Paige, and Brandi; and great-grandchildren, Abigale, Isabella, Anna, Mia, Mikel, Patrick, Bailey, Jagger, and Juniper.

Of course there are pets, Scudder and Cooper, loving part-time visitors from family.

Prior to his long career with the State of Missouri, Dwain served some time as a forest fire fighter in the late 1950s in Northern California and the State of Washington. That may explain his present interests in bird watching, traveling and hiking.

Another fond memory is having danced with Tina Turner at the Tiger Club in Crystal City.

During his years here, Dwain has served as Treasurer and Trustee, among a variety of other duties. He defines Locust Grove as a friendly, welcoming and comfortable church. If he could change anything, it would be to have two services on Sunday.

A native Missourian, Dwain is from the lead-mining area of the state, the small town of River Mines, near Flat River, south of St. Louis.



We light the Christ candle as a sign that the Light of the world has come. May Christ shine in us and through us, now and forevermore.





For the past five years we have been sending a group of our Locust Grove Church kids to Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp in Vienna, MO. We have reserved spots again for this summer for our group to go. Our week will be July 5th-10th for Junior Camp 4. This is a Junior Camp for children ages 8 to 13.

Please check this link to learn more about the camp and to register: <https://turkeyhillranch.com/>. When registering, click summer camps, register, and either login in (previous campers) or create an account (new campers).

Registration opened January 6. Our code to use when registering is MLG and will expire on Friday, March 27. Using our group code during registration assures that our kids are grouped together in cabins.

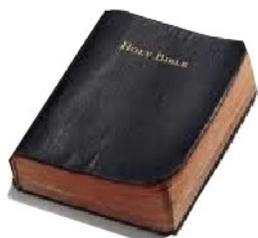
We hope that your children can join in on the fun. Those who have gone in the past have come back having had an awesome experience. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or if you would like to know more. If you plan on signing your child up, please text or email me so I can keep track of how many are going from our church and adjust our reserved spots accordingly.

Thanks!

***Shayla Roop***

573-406-4349

[sroop@cpsk12.org](mailto:sroop@cpsk12.org)



# Twice Blessed Christmas Store is the gifting place again



*The Christmas Store*

**With Grateful Hearts—Thank You from Twice Blessed**

Dear Friends,  
We are still glowing from the joy of this year's **Twice Blessed Christmas Store**, and we want to say—from the bottom of our hearts—thank you.

Because of your time, your hands, your hearts, and your generosity, we were able to provide Christmas for nearly **120 families**. That's hundreds and hundreds of gifts, wrapped in love and hope, and delivered with dignity and care.

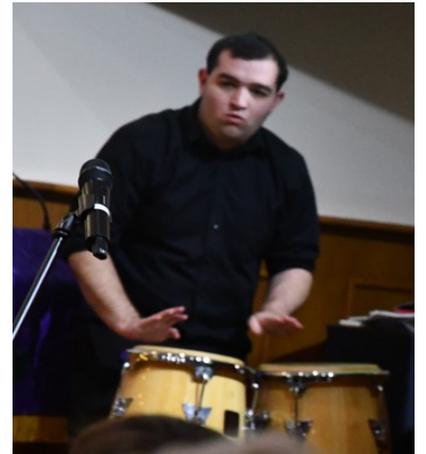
From hauling bins out of storage to transforming the church into a festive store, from crafting beautiful baskets to wrapping gifts with flair, from welcoming guests to tackling the mountain of cleanup—you showed up. You gave your best. And you reminded us what community really means.

This wasn't just a successful event. It was a **holy moment**. A glimpse of the Kingdom. A celebration of what happens when people come together to serve, to love, and to lift one another up.

On behalf of **Twice Blessed**, and all of us who witnessed your kindness in action: **Thank you. We love you. We are so grateful for you.**

With joy and deep appreciation,  
Glenna ( Jill, too)







### *O Come, Little Children*



### 🎄 A Joyful Gathering: Our 43rd Annual Christmas Program 🎄

On Sunday, December 14, Midway Locust Grove Church hosted its 43rd Annual All Church Christmas Program, *O Come, Little Children*. The sanctuary was filled with warmth, music, and over 205 attendees—a beautiful turnout that reflected the heart of our church family.

From the sweet voices of the MW Sprouts and MW Kids to the festive flair of the MLG Jazz Combo and the reverent harmonies of the Chancel Choir, the evening was a celebration of joy, tradition, and togetherness.

We're so grateful to everyone who participated, attended, and helped make this evening unforgettable. Here's to 43 years of Christmas joy—and many more to come!





# The Kitchen Cabinet

Remembering  
Mary Kaye's  
Food Ministry

Burr! **January** is so cold. Here is a comforting easy dessert for you to enjoy. You can make it quickly with ingredients you have on hand.

Enjoy,  
**Hope Burkart**

## Granny's Rice Pudding

- 1 cup instant rice
- 2 cups water
- Pinch of salt
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 1 stick of butter

Put water and salt in sauce pan and bring to a boil over low heat until water is absorbed and rice is soft...about 20 minutes. Add sugar, vanilla, eggs and butter; stir until butter is melted. Mix well. Place in serving dish or individual pudding cups.

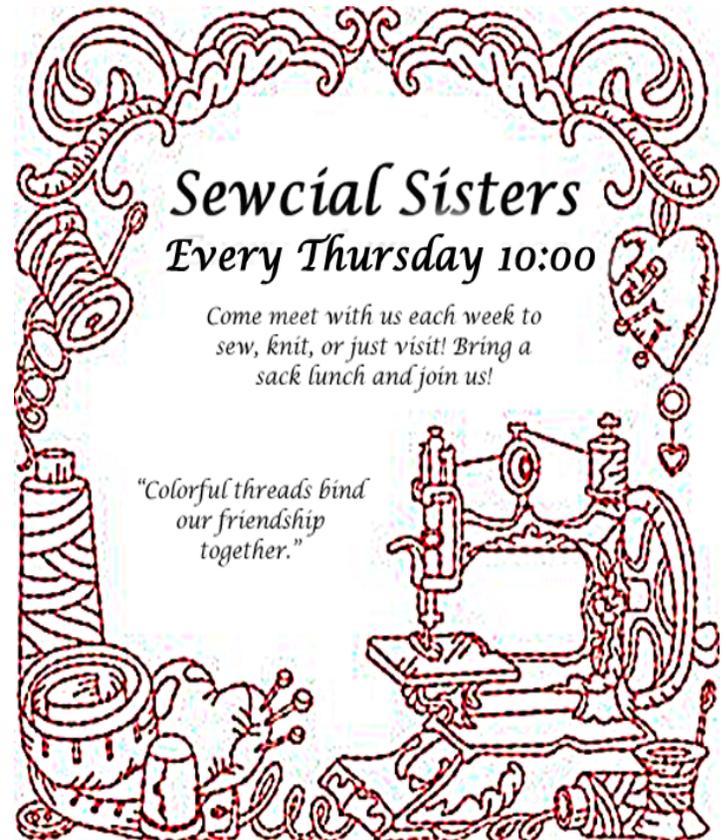
\*Optional: sprinkle nutmeg on top for extra flavor and color

## Join us for Second Tuesday Lunch

January 13 Noon

in the  
Fellowship  
Hall.

Bring a dish  
and a friend.



## Warren Filbert Service (Continued from Page 3)

Memorial contributions are suggested to Midway Locust Grove Church.

Arrangements were under the direction of Parker-Millard Funeral Service and Crematory, 12 East Ash Street, Columbia, MO 65203; 574-440-4153, Condolences may be left online for the family at [www.millardfamilychapels.com](http://www.millardfamilychapels.com).



Semi-monthly the doors of Twice Blessed open wide to welcome neighbors from across Midway and beyond—and each week, more than 100 individuals and families find not just clothing and personal hygiene products, but dignity, connection, and care.

This vibrant free store continues to be a vital expression of our church’s mission: to love our neighbors, serve with joy, and meet real needs with grace. Volunteers offer more than assistance—they offer presence. A listening ear. A warm smile. A reminder that no one walks alone.

In recent months, our partnerships have deepened and expanded:

- **Burrell Behavioral Health:** Together, we’re supporting individuals navigating mental health challenges by offering practical resources and a welcoming space.
- **Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition:** We’re honored to provide clothing and essentials for survivors rebuilding their lives with courage and hope.
- **Midway Neighbors:** From young families to seniors on fixed incomes, we continue to serve our local community with compassion and consistency.

Behind every donated coat, every folded blanket, every pair of shoes placed on a shelf, there is a story of generosity—and a glimpse of God’s abundance. Volunteers give their time and hearts. Donors give what they can. And together, we create a space where people feel seen, valued, and loved.

*Basic necessities free of charge  
to those temporarily in need*

Open January 15, 2026



Twice  
blessed

Open 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays  
12:00 – 5:00

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

As the season of Epiphany unfolds, we celebrate the light of Christ revealed in unexpected places — and at Twice Blessed, that light shines through every act of generosity. Each donated item, each volunteer hour, each warm greeting at the door is part of a holy story: one where neighbors care for neighbors, and dignity is restored through shared abundance. As we begin 2026, may we continue to follow the star of compassion, trusting that even the smallest gifts can lead to grace.

*With many thanks for your support, from  
Jill and Glenna!*

The Will of God  
never takes you  
where the  
Grace of God  
will not protect you.



# MIDWAY LOCUST GROVE CHURCH

2600 N. Locust Grove Church Road  
Columbia, MO 65202

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Administrative Assistant: Catherine Shanahan  
Church phone: 573-445-4667  
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YouTube: [mwlocustgrove](https://www.youtube.com/mwlocustgrove)  
Instagram: [@mwlocustgrove](https://www.instagram.com/@mwlocustgrove)

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

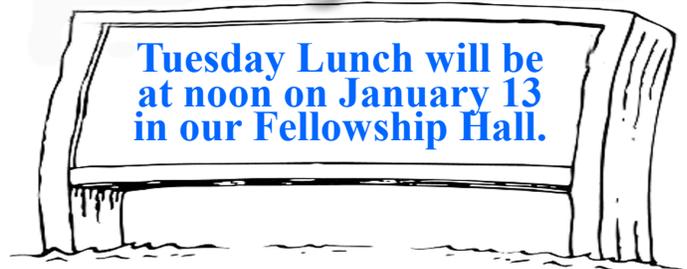
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**Find the hidden Bible  in this issue.**

Visit our Web Site: [www.mwlocustgrove.com](http://www.mwlocustgrove.com)

*Volume 39 Issue 1 January 2026*

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



## The Back Row By Gene Baumann

By now those of us who write checks should have adapted to writing 2026 instead of 2025. I still pause, but have pretty well adapted.

The speed with which 2026 arrived in our lives amazes me, and prompts me to look back at the old year and ahead to the new one. While there are a number of aspects of our lives to compare, one of the best is to take a closer look at our church. It is a remarkable story of achievement in both physical and spiritual aspects of our congregation.

You need only to read this issue of Locust Leaves to grasp the momentum of the recent years and the promises of our step into this new one. While I cannot cover every aspect of our evolving faith, on Page One of this issue Rev. Ben describes a new six-week series of sermons which he introduced last Sunday. "As we begin a new

### *January 2026*

year together, we are turning our attention to what matters most.

"We will walk through a six-week sermon series called Fundamentals, a clear, beautiful and hopeful exploration of the core truths of the Christian faith."

Each of will have our own favorite aspects of the progress the church has made in recent years, and there are plenty of examples. This issue of Locust Leaves also includes coverage or our Christmas season celebrations, the choir's special performance, Christmas Eve Service, and of course, the Twice Blessed Christmas Store.

The past year saw major improvements in the sanctuary, the basement youth sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and other areas, the expansion of the youth program being significant. . The calendar is full of study opportunities and mission activities. Attendance has more than doubled, and Kelley Frink's treasurer's report on page two will surely bring a smile to your face and heart. .