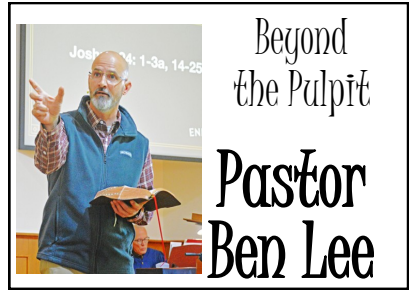




Locust Leaves

State of the Church | Ministry Update Gathering

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



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ministries & Missions	2
Birthdays, Tuesday Lunch	3
Getting To Know You	4
Easter Egg Hunt and Dinner	5
Family Fun Night	6-7
Church Clean Up Day	8
Letter from God	9
Kitchen Cabinet	10
Twice Blessed	11
The Back Row	12

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, March 10**
Second Tuesday Lunch — Noon
Prayer Ministry — 1:30
- March 14** —9 :30 a.m.
Church Cleanup
- March 15**—6:00 p.m.
State of the Church
Gathering
- March 29**
Palm Sunday

On Sunday, March 15 at 6:00 PM, we will gather in the sanctuary for our first annual State of the Church | Ministry Update Gathering.

This evening will be an opportunity for us, as a church family, to pause together and take a clear look at where we are as a congregation. We will reflect on what God has done among us, share updates from across our ministries, and look ahead to where we believe the Lord is leading us in the months ahead.

Last year, our Administrative Ministry Council engaged in an eight month process called The Listening Church. As part of that journey, our leadership team spent significant time intentionally listening to God through the practice of the Ignatian Examen, journaling and praying as we sought the leading of the Holy Spirit. When we later gathered to reflect on what the Lord had been revealing, several common themes began to emerge.

Three of the clearest takeaways were the importance of **communication, relationships, and transparency**. As an emerging local church, I deeply believe these areas are vital to our overall health and effectiveness as a body of believers.

Communication helps us share clearly **what** we are doing in ministry and **how** we are pursuing the mission God has given us. Relationships remind us that ministry is ultimately about **who** we are serving, who we are becoming, and the community we are building together. Transparency invites us to communicate the **why** behind our decisions and direction as a church.

This annual gathering is one way we hope to live into those commitments.

The evening will be simple and focused. We will briefly report on where we have been and where things currently stand across our ministries, and then spend time looking ahead to key priorities and initiatives for the remainder of 2026. Our goal is to keep the gathering encouraging, informative, and concise, lasting no more than one hour.

We hope you will make plans to join us on Sunday, March 15 at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary as we celebrate what God has done and look forward together to what lies ahead.

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.

We Are Hiring!

We are prayerfully searching for the right individuals to join our staff in two important roles: Administrative & Communications Coordinator and Student Ministry Director. These positions play a vital role in supporting our mission and caring for our church and community.

If someone comes to mind who may be a great fit, we encourage you to share these opportunities with them. And if you have a connection in town who may know someone qualified, please feel free to forward the information along. Sometimes the right person is just one introduction away.

You can find full job descriptions and application details at the church's internet links below or by contacting Jessie Kempf, 573-673-5152.

Admin: <https://www.indeed.com/viewjob?jk=6ac6e2d3e7a34c6b>
Students: <https://www.indeed.com/viewjob?jk=e553906fb3600ac4>

Our Ronald McDonald House team continues to provide hospital meals

Tuesday, March 10th - 10:00 a.m.

Packing lunches and preparing for dinner.

Meet at Ronald McDonald House.

Volunteers are needed, please email Sherri

to sign up. Point Person: Sherri Perry,

sherrileaperry@gmail.com

*Do for others what you want them
to do for you. Matthew 7:12*

Happy Birthday

March 2026

1 Heidi Netemeyer
4 Mandy Gessling
6 Gideon Gessling
7 Laurie Weaver
11 Amber Burkart

11 Paige Butzlaff
12 Kieth Groh
15 Joe Burkart
15 Richard Moore

15 George Wieberg
16 Anna Butzlaff
23 Carter Cunningham
24 Brian Burkart

25 Dwain Hovis
26 Travis Kempf
27 Ron Utterback
29 Karen Moore
29 Carolyn Doyle

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.

Second Tuesday Lunch

February 10

March 10



The February 10th program was presented by Lisa Groshong, Co-Founder and Operations Coordinator for Como Craft Collective.

The group keeps usable and reusable materials in circulation while supporting creative exploration in a welcoming environment.

Lisa is a lifelong crafter and was inspired by the thrifty creativity of artisans she met while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zambia. She holds a PhD in Natural resources from the University of Missouri.

The entree for the luncheon, supported by items brought by those attending, was Dan Meives' creation of ham & beans.

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

The entree for the meal will be Dan Meives' version of pork Tenderloin. What more incentive do you need to attend?

April 14

The entree for the lunch in April will be fried chicken. The program will be about the annual ReMember mission trip to the reservation in South Dakota.





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.

Earl and Mariea Caruthers

If you want to know some church history, ask Earl and Mariea. They have lived a significant part of it.

Mariea grew up in the church. Her grandparents and most aunts and uncles attended, and she was highly involved in all the activities, youth float trips and Bible School.

Earl's parents were Baptists. He started attending Locust Grove while he and Mariea were dating. They were married in the Midway Methodist Church on April 21, 1968, about two months before it became United Methodist Church.

As with a number of others present members, Earl and Mariea left the church for several years before returning in 2000, and becoming very active again.

Earl and Mariea both attended the one-room school at Midway. Earl completed third through eighth grades at the school; Mariea made it through the third grade before the creation of Midway Heights Elementary School eliminated the one-roomer.

The marriage produced two children. Ben was born February 5, 1969. He went on to earn a BS degree in Food Science and an MA in Business, both from the University of Missouri. He has spent his career in quality control, and lives in Springfield, MO with his wife Jodi. They have two sons.

Tanner Scott is 32 and has an art degree



in painting. Reese Benjamin is 25 and is working on his Theater Instruction degree. He has produced an award-winning short video.

The couple's daughter Cathey was born June 11, 1973, and became a fiber artist, doing spinning, weaving, knitting, and crochet. She earned a double major in preschool and early education with a minor in history from Stephens College. She passed away on August 3, 2018.

Earl's occupation was as a technician who made things for Electrical Engineering undergraduate and doctoral students at Miz-zou. He worked in the same building for 32 years before retiring in 2000.

Mariea worked at MU Hospital just out of high school, stopped to raise the kids, then worked at Midway Heights as kitchen manager and bus driver. She then worked at Stephens College 16 years and earned a BA degree, then an MA degree from Mizzou. She returned to the MU Hospital for several years before retiring in 2010.

Earl's hobbies include fixing things., mechanical, clocks, wood. If it has moving parts, he will do his best to make it work.

Mariea does lots of fiber arts, knitting, spinning, cord making, weaving; and demonstrating at art festivals.

Both enjoy trout fishing and walking.

Their one quote for this article: "God has blessed us with an awesome church family."

SAVE THE DATE

**What: 5th Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Lunch
with the Easter Bunny**

When: Saturday, April 4, 2026

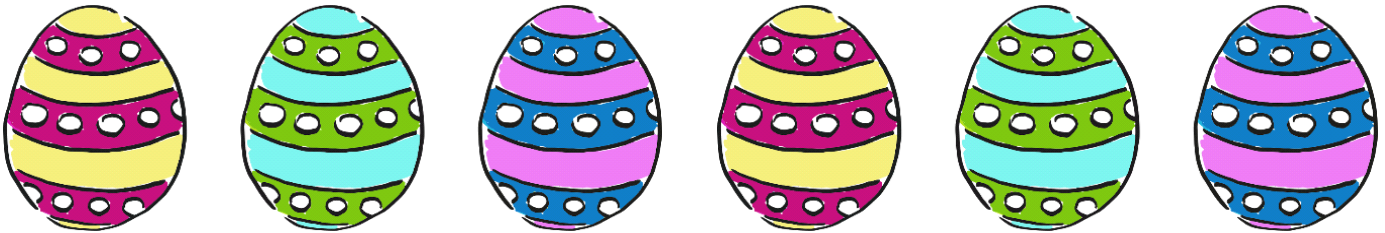
11:00 Register for Easter Egg Hunt

11:30 Egg Hunt

12:00 Lunch with the Easter Bunny

Who: Children age 1 - 5th Grade

***We are asking for donations of Easter candy. The smaller the pre-packaged candy, the better it fits in the eggs. There is a basket in the fellowship hall. Please have donations to church by Sunday, March 22nd. Thank you!**



Lent begins. . .

Lent got off to a good start February 14 with a good attendance at Ash Wednesday receiving the ash cross on their forehead as a sign of repentance.



BINGO **1**

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!

3 **5**

On Friday, February 20th we had our first Fun and Fellowship Event of the year. We had a fellowship hall full of people who were ready for some BINGO fun! The evening kicked off with pizza for dinner and was followed by many rounds of BINGO and lots of prizes. Thank you to everyone who attended and for all the help cleaning and getting things back in order at the end of the night. Our next Fun and Fellowship Event will be the Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Lunch with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, April 4th @ 11:00 a.m. We hope you can join us!

Shayla Roop



The prize table was filled with items for all ages, and toward the end of the evening gained several left-over pizzas. While no one counted, it appeared the younger players made more trips to the board than the adults.



The evening was another example of the close relationship between the adults and the children of our church and community..

Save the Date!

Give Back Day-Spring Church Clean Up - Saturday, March 14th - Point Person: Leslie Brown brownie1262@hotmail.com

Spring is in the air and that means it's time for our annual church work day. We'll be cleaning our church inside and out, plus along Henderson Road and Locust Grove Church Road in preparation for Easter. So , mark your calendars for Saturday, March 14th to join us for a rewarding few hours to make our church sparkle! Start time is 9:30 and we'll wrap up with a lunch in the Fellowship Hall.

Please sign up so we know how many to plan for lunch. Sign-up sheets are located in the Fellowship Hall and you can choose whether you would like to work outside or inside.

Items of interest to bring if you'll be helping outside: sunscreen, work gloves, bug spray, rakes, wheel barrow, hedge trimmers, shovel, etc.

Items to bring for inside cleaning: Windex, paper towels, rags, buckets, rubber gloves, etc.

Come rain or shine.

Contact Leslie Brown for questions at 573-355-3978.



Learn to
Read the Bible



**The Men's Bible Study meets
Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. The
Women's study meets Sundays
at 4:00 to 5:30. p.m.**

Letter from God

The source of this article is unknown, but it is worth sharing. Maybe it really is from God.

Ruth went to her mail box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter: "Dear Ruth, I'm going to be in the neighborhood Saturday afternoon and would like to visit. Love always, God."

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table. "Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner. She reached for her purse and counted out its contents.

Five dollars and forty cents. "Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least."

She threw on her coat and hurried out the door. A loaf of French bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk...leaving Ruth a grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday. Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm.

"Hey, lady, can you help us, lady?" Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags.

"Look lady, I ain't got a job, 'ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, it's getting cold and we're kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and frankly she was certain they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to.

"Sir, I'd like to help, but I'm a poor

woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him.

"Yeah, well, okay lady. I understand. Thanks anyway." The man put his arm around the woman's, turned and they headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart.

"Sir, wait!" The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag. "Thank you lady. Thank you very much!" "Yes, thank you!"

It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering. "You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one."

Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to her house without her coat and nothing to serve her guest. "Thank you lady! Thank you very much."

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and was worried. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him. She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox. "That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

"Dear Ruth, I was glad to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. And thank you too, for the beautiful coat.

Love always, God"



The Kitchen Cabinet

Remembering
Mary Kaye's
Funct Ministry

A little **Leprechaun** shared this baked version of Irish Stew with me. Lots of vegetables will fill and warm you up on cold March days.

Enjoy,
Hope Burkart

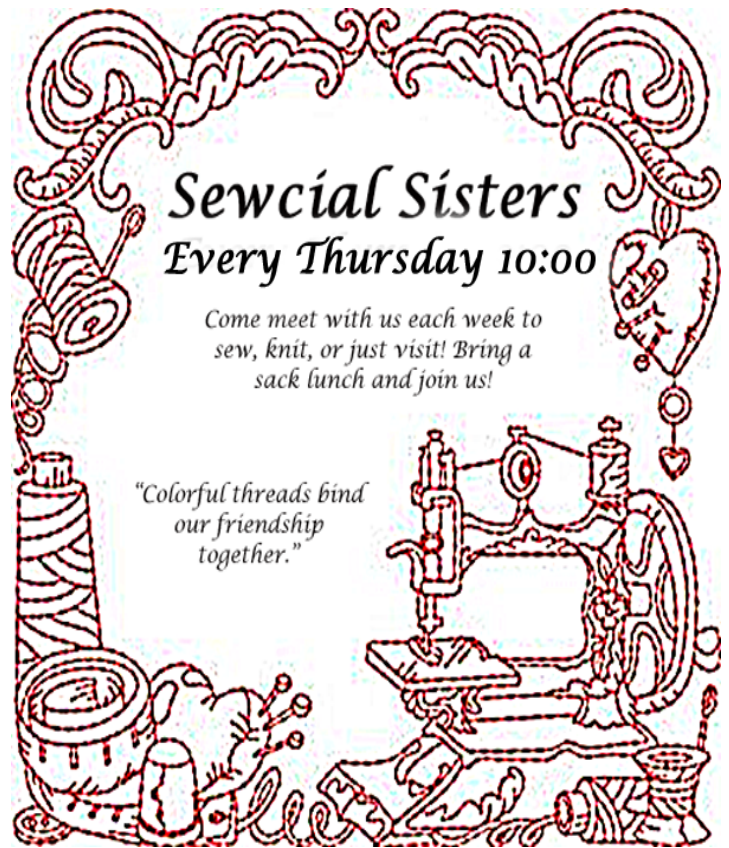
Baked Irish Stew

- 2 lbs beef stew meat cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 - 14 1/2 oz can diced tomatoes , undrained
- 3 Tbsp minute tapioca
- 1 can beef broth
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 4 carrots peeled and cut into 1- inch pieces
- 2 stalks celery, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 3 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 medium onion, roughly chopped
- 1 slice bread, cubed

Brown beef cubes, drain, and set aside. Combine tomatoes , beef broth, tapioca, sugar, salt and pepper. Stir in beef, vegetables, and bread cubes. Pour into greased baking dish. Cover with foil and bake 375 degrees for 2 hours or until meat and vegetables are tender.

Join us for Second Tuesday Lunch

March 10
Noon in the
Fellowship
Hall.
Bring a dish
and a friend .



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**





We are always in need of some of these.

- ✓ Shampoo
- ✓ Q-tips
- ✓ Laundry Detergent
- ✓ Dish Soap
- ✓ Ladies Underpants
- ✓ Small Toys
- ✓ Diapers Size 4/5
- ✓ Paper Towels
- ✓ Baggies, zip-locks, etc
- ✓ Men's workboots
- ✓ Small appliances, crock pots, electric skillets always appreciated!
- ✓ small decoratives
- ✓ towels, bath linens, etc

Please
NO clothing
needed
currently!!



Basic necessities free of charge to those temporarily in need

Midway Locust Grove United Methodist Church

Open March 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](https://www.facebook.com/mwlocustgrove)
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.***

Locust Leaves Editor: Gene Baumann
Rocheport@aol.com 573-445-1998

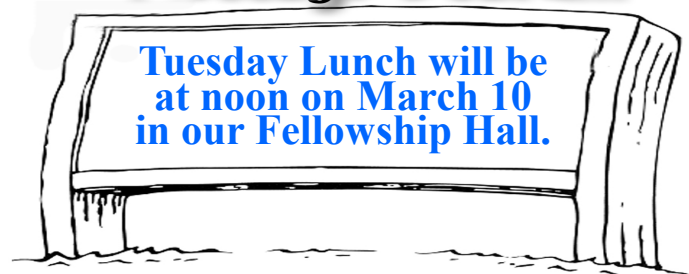


Find the hidden Bible in this issue.

Visit our Web Site: at www.locustgrove.com

Volume 39 Issue 3 March 2026

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



The Back Row By Gene Baumann

You may have gotten the impression from last month's Locust Leaves that I am fascinated with cemeteries. The Village of Locust Grove will do that to those who become familiar with it.

I have become fascinated with another cemetery, coincidentally also founded by the Methodists in the early 1800s in Boonville.

Sunset Hills Cemetery is one of two city cemeteries in Boonville, and is commonly known as The Black Cemetery. It is 11 acres of hilly terrain in a western residential area. Not long after it was established, the city created another cemetery, "for the elite citizenry" of the city. Many white families moved their departed members from Sunset Hills to the new Walnut Grove, now one of the largest cemeteries in central Missouri.

March 2026

What has attracted me to Sunset Hills is a white sign with the name "Willie" lettered on it. Below the name in small letters is "The Littlest Stranger." I could not resist searching for the story.

Willie traveled with his family from New York to Kansas in the mid-1850s. They had been lured by an opportunity to join a Vegetarian group to provide food to people for a living. It turned out to be a scam, so the family headed back to New York. Half way across Missouri, Willie and his dad both became very ill with malaria. They stopped in Boonville, where Willie died at age 3 in September 1856, and his father died in October.

The mother and sister returned to New York after burying the two in Sunset Hills Cemetery.

I have discovered at least two more stories that need researching — the last man hanged in a public hanging in Boonville in 1879, and the first wife of artist George Caleb Bingham.