

The Caller

First United Methodist Church

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December 2025



Advent Study

Sign up at the Welcome Center for one of the two dates the study is offered. Either Sundays beginning **November 30** at 3:00 pm or Mondays beginning **December 1** at 10:00 am.

Giving Opportunity

The Charlie Brown tree is in the Atrium ready for decorations of NEW waterproof gloves/mittens, hats, personal size blankets, socks, and underwear. All items collected will be delivered to Jamieson Center on **Monday, December 1**.

Scrip Gift Cards

Find something for everyone on your Christmas list with gift cards available from over 750 top brands. Every gift card purchased through the scrip program immediately raises funds for our church. See LeAnn in the church office to order cards by **Tuesday, December 2**. A list of participating retailers is available at the Welcome Center.

Christmas on the Square

We will be handing out FREE popcorn and Advent Devotionals at the Square from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. on **Friday, December 5**. Can you help? Sign up at the Welcome Center! The church will also be open as a warming center and restrooms will be available.

Christmas Eve

This year we will have TWO opportunities to worship on Christmas Eve. Here's what to expect:

At 5:00 pm we will have our joy-filled celebration including music with the Praise Band, Sanctuary Choir, and organ. It will include a children's moment, and a message entitled "What's God Up To?" There will be communion, and the service will end with the passing of the light of Christ as we sing "Silent Night." At 8:00 pm the service will have a quieter, "un-plugged" feel to it. There will be no screens, no technology, just worship like people did for centuries. We will have singing, scripture, a brief message, communion, and "Silent Night."



Christmas Love Gift for Staff

In appreciation for all the staff does, the Staff/Parish Ministry team is asking the congregation to consider contributing to a Christmas Love Gift to be divided among the staff. Donations can be dropped off in the church office or placed in the offering plate through **Sunday, December 14.**

Buchanan Choir



The Buchanan Community Chorus will be presenting their annual Christmas concerts on Friday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Faith United Presbyterian Church and Saturday, December 20 at 2:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Monmouth. There will be a freewill donation. Please join us as we usher in the season by sharing the beautiful gift of music and the message of Christmas with "The Gift of Christmas."

Santa for Seniors

Strom Center and Security Savings Bank will once again be collecting and distributing gifts to our local senior citizens 60 and over and disabled adults in Warren and Henderson counties who do not have family around at Christmas time. Tags are hung on a Christmas tree in the lobby at Security Savings Bank in Monmouth where members of the surrounding communities can pick from. Thank you in advance.



As we enter the sacred season of Advent, we step once again into a time of anticipation. It's a time of watching, waiting, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Advent invites us not only to look back to Bethlehem, but also to look forward with hope, trusting that God is still breaking into the world with light, truth, and grace.

This year, our Advent and Christmas worship will focus on four groups of witnesses who help tell the story of Christ's coming: **prophets, angels, shepherds, and magi.** Each one points us toward a different facet of God's good news.

The Prophets remind us that long before the manger, God began whispering a promise: a Messiah would come, a light would shine in the darkness, and a Savior would bring peace. Their voices urge us to stay attentive and expectant, even when hope feels far away.

The Angels break into the quiet with a message of startling joy: "Do not be afraid." They announce to a weary world that God is doing something new, something beyond anything we could imagine. Their proclamation invites us to listen for God's voice today and to receive the good news with open hearts.

The Shepherds, ordinary people going about their ordinary work, are the first to hear heaven's song. They run to see the Christ child and return praising God. They remind us that God meets us right where we are—and that the gift of Christ is for everyone.

The Magi journey from afar, following a star and trusting that God is guiding them step by step. Their story calls us to seek Christ with persistence and wonder while bringing the best we have to offer.

Through these Advent themes, we prepare ourselves not just for a joyful holiday, but for a deeply holy encounter. As we light the candles each week, we remember that Christ still comes—to guide, to save, to comfort, and to shine light into every place where darkness lingers.

May this Advent season fill us with hope through the prophets, joy through the angels, humility through the shepherds, and wonder through the magi. And may the Christ child be born anew in our hearts, our homes, and our church.

Care Notes

Stop by the table across from the office to see the new selection of Care Notes that are available for you to pick up for yourself or take one for a friend or neighbor that you care about. There are topics that address both health issues and grief.



Operation Christmas Child



Thank you for your care and generosity to kids in places across the world who will be receiving these “Operation Christmas Child” boxes. Children receive one in a lifetime, and it opens up the opportunity to share Jesus with them and make an eternal impact, not just a temporary one. We delivered 27 boxes to Kunes in Galesburg. Kunes will be paying the shipping fee for all of our boxes!

Committee Members for 2026

We elected new members at the charge conference. If you would like to see who is on each committee for the coming year, the list is available at the Welcome Center.

Mission Breakfast Thank You

Thank you to everyone who donated food and attended the November 16 Mission Breakfast. \$671.00 was donation to help with holiday needs at the Jamieson Community Center.

Noisy Offering

\$867.93 was donated on November 23. This will be donated to Jamieson Community Center and Helping Hands food pantries.

Grace Place, our youth Sunday School



McKenna Carlson won the big candy bar drawing this month. Congratulations McKenna!!!

We have been busy getting ready for the Christmas program. The youth are practicing their lines, trying on costumes, and having fun playing their roles in the Christmas story. This is a time when the true meaning of Christmas can be revealed to the kids. It's wonderful when they finally understand the amazing and miraculous plan God had to save His people through His Son, Jesus, who had to come to us as a precious baby.



We did take time to make Turkeys out of Oreos and thank God for His blessings that He has given each one of us. We are so grateful!

Don't forget: Christmas program on **December 14** during worship at 9:30.

Blessings,

Miss Chris and the Grace Place Gang

Senior News

Weekly prayer time is held in the Chapel at 9:30 on Wednesday mornings. It is followed by Bible Study from 10:00 – 11:00. Currently we are studying the book of Romans. Bring your Bible and join us. All are welcome to come for either one or both. We will not meet on December 24 or on December 31.

In the Atrium you can find prayer shawls and back pillows displayed. You are invited to select one that you can give to someone for whom it might bring comfort.

Weekly sermons are delivered to over 30 people and communion is available, upon request. If you would like to assist in this ministry, contact Joyce Clark at 309-299-5682.

Dream Team is planning to have three Saturday morning workshops to provide information that will be helpful to all adults. On January 31 from 9:00 – 10:00 in the Chapel the program is "Know the Signs of Alzheimers." Mark your calendar and watch for further information.

Healing Touch – is non-invasive and effective.

A growing number of people have chosen to experience healing touch and have found it to be beneficial. Some of the benefits include relieving stress and depression, reducing pain, supporting the body during chemotherapy, strengthening the immune system and enhancing recovery following surgery. If you would like to schedule an appointment, call Chris Moore (309-337-4162) or Joyce Clark (309-299-5682). There is no charge for a session.

New Nursery Attendant



Just over a year ago, we re-opened the nursery, and we regularly have eight children during worship. Our safety policy says there must be two adults with children and youth at all times. We have wonderful volunteers, but scheduling has been challenging. So, the Staff-Parish Relations Team was asked and agreed that we should hire a second person to be there regularly. Hannah Clark has agreed to be that person! We WILL still need and use volunteers whenever one of the two regular nursery attendants is unavailable, so if you are one of our faithful volunteers, thank you! And know that we still need you.

It is important that we offer this very important ministry so that parents can attend worship and grow in their faith. This adds \$1,560 to our total 2026 budget. We believe that the faithful people of this church will step up to help us meet that need. If we want families with children, we need to be prepared for them!

Choral Dynamics

"The Beauty of Christmas" will be presented on December 5 and 6 at 7:00 p.m. and December 7 at 2:00 p.m. at the Orpheum Theatre in Galesburg.

December Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Craig Armstrong | 19 Donna Smith |
| Janine Todd | Pam Stinemates |
| 2 Keegan Smith | 20 Lisa Ankle |
| Eric Nicol | 21 Landon Andrews |
| 3 Anita Anderson | Dereck Lemley |
| 6 Dee Armstrong | Lyla Moore |
| 7 Sarah Clayton | 22 Bernie Troutwine |
| 8 Missy Roberts | 24 J.R. Andrews |
| 10 Lillian Edwards | 28 Anita Sims |
| 15 Larry Myers | 29 Dave Flaar |
| 16 Jordan Lemley | 30 Carolyn Thomas |
| 15 Jim O'Brien | Lily McLaughlin |
| 18 Daniel Edwards | |



Ministry Teams

Directing Pastor - Rev. Shelly Forrest

Secretary/Financial Secretary - LeAnn Murk
Treasure - Melinda Todd
Senior Ministries Coordinator - Joyce Clark
Education Director - Chris Moore
Youth Coordinators - Adam and Michelle Carlson
Nursery Attendants - Julianne Drum and
Hannah Clark

Certified Lay Speaker - Anita Anderson
Sanctuary Choir, Bell Choir and Praise
Team Director - Adelia McGee
Organist - Elizabeth Walker
Keyboard - Joy Boostrom
Custodians - Doug Ray and Mitch Ray

First United Methodists Church of Monmouth

DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 10:00 am Advent Study	2 Deadline for Scrip card orders No Trustees or Worship meeting	3 <u>EVERY WEDNESDAY</u> Prayer Group 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:00 AM Bell Choir 6:00 PM Sanctuary Choir 7:00 PM	4 1:30 UWF Executive meeting in Lounge	5 5-8:00 pm Christmas on the Square	6
7 1-2:30 pm Youth Group 2:00 pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00 pm Advent Study	8 10:00 am Advent Study No Ad Council or Finance meeting	9	10 9:30 am Deborah Circle meeting in the Lounge	11	12	13
14 Children's Christmas Program 1-3 pm Youth Group 3:00 pm Advent Study	15 10:00 am Advent Study	16 January caller info deadline	17	18	19	20 2:00 pm Buchanan Choir Performance in the Sanctuary
21 2:00 pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00 pm Advent Study No Youth Group	22 10:00 am Advent Study	23	24 5:00 pm & 8:00 pm Christmas Eve Service Church Office Closed	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed	26 Church Office Closed	27
28 No Youth Group	29 Church Office Closed	30 Church Office Closed	31 New Year's Eve Church Office Closed	1 Church Office Closed	2 Church Office Closed	3