

The Caller

First United Methodist Church

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January 2026



Unhanging of the Greens – Sunday, January 11

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, January 11 to help us "un-hang the greens" after a beautiful season. Donuts, muffins and coffee will be available for those who stay and help.



Sermon Series for January 11 – February 1



The Bible begins with a book called Genesis. It is not merely the beginning—it tells the story of "new beginnings." Generation after generation—Adam, Noah, and Abraham—God gave second chances. Here we are at the cusp of a new year, from creation to covenant, what better time to dig into some of the foundational teachings of God's Word to us as we worship together.

Alpha Course begins Tuesday, January 13

Alpha is a course in the fundamentals of Christian faith. The word "alpha" also means "beginning" as it is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. And Jesus calls himself the "Alpha and the Omega", the first and the last. I have heard many people say that they do not remember much of what they learned in Confirmation class. That's ok. Confirmation was never meant to be the end of our learning! In the early church, the time leading up to Easter was used to prepare individuals for a commitment to following Christ. I have been teaching the youth version to our High Schoolers this fall, and I wish to offer our adults the same opportunity to firm up their foundations in the basics of what we believe so that we are all equipped to share our faith with more confidence, or simply have a better understanding of what we believe and why. If you wish to join me on this journey, please join me in the Chapel on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. We will begin on January 13. We will not meet on the first Tuesday of each month due to other church meetings. The final session will be on March 24. Alpha speaks to skeptics, so this is a great opportunity to invite someone.



Pastor Shelly

Piano Concert – Sunday January 18



Pianist Christian Gonzalez, along with a new friend, Ricardo Abapo, Jr., will return to bless us with his gift of music on Sunday, January 18 at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. He will play several classical pieces, and leave time for us to lift our voices and sing some of our favorite hymns of faith. There will be a free-will donation.



Alzheimer's Workshop – Saturday, January 31

Dream Team is planning to have three Saturday morning workshops. The first will be on January 31 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. in the Chapel. The topic will be Alzheimer's - "Know the 10 Warning Signs". It will also include information about caregiving. The workshop will provide information that will be helpful to all adults. Also, save the dates of February 28 and March 28 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. for other informational meetings. More information will follow.

A New Year, A New Beginning



As we turn the calendar to January, we're reminded once again that our God is a God of new beginnings. The world tells us that a new year is a chance to reset our goals, form new habits, or try again at things we may have set aside. But long before we made New Year's resolutions, God was already in the business of renewal.

Scripture is filled with reminders that God continually leads His people into fresh starts. From the promise in Lamentations 3 that His mercies "are new every morning," to Paul's assurance in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that anyone in Christ is a new creation, we are encouraged to see each new season as an invitation to trust God more deeply. January isn't simply the first square on a calendar—it's a reminder that God has not finished His work in us or in our world. He's just getting started.

As a church family, this month invites us to reflect on where we've been and to think about where God is calling us next. What spiritual practices might God be nudging you to renew? Where might forgiveness bring healing? How might we as individuals and as a congregation—step into new opportunities for service, discipleship, and community?

The good news is that new beginnings don't depend on our strength alone. They rest on God's grace, which meets us right where we are. We begin again not because we are perfect, but because God is faithful.

May this new year be a season of hope, growth, and fresh faith. And may we walk into 2026 with open hearts, ready to embrace the new beginnings God has prepared for us.

"Behold, I am making all things new." — Revelation 21:5

Updates



Part of being a United Methodist pastor is, in addition to responsibilities at the local church, to be part of the broader connection. Most of you know that I serve on the board of the WIU Wesley Foundation, our student ministry in Macomb. You may not know that in addition to that position, I represent WIU Wesley at occasional Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM) meetings which meet several times a year, thankfully on Zoom!

As of this fall, I have now also begun serving on the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM). This committee oversees people who are exploring and taking steps forward into their call to serve God as a United Methodist pastor. This group meets several times per year. Monmouth will be hosting the March meeting. We provide oversight and accountability for clergy as they make their way through the ordination process. One of my responsibilities to this group is to assign clergy mentors to people in the process. I have always found it to be life-giving to serve on this committee as we get to see pastors who are just beginning their journey in ministry. Their call is fresh, and their experience of God is new, and it is a blessing to be part of the team that encourages them.

And as of December, the District Superintendent has also asked me to be part of a new group that will be working with a consultant to help us to envision how better to meet the needs of our district churches with pastoral leadership that helps those churches to thrive, not just survive. This will require one full day per month of my time. My hope is that the things that I learn there will transfer home to us as well. That because of this time, my ministry in Monmouth will be even better.

We are blessed to be part of a denomination where we are not lone rangers. We are part of something bigger than ourselves. As John Wesley said, and the window in our Chapel quotes, “The World is Our Parish.”

United Women of Faith

At their December meeting, the United Women of Faith assembled and distributed 18 care package boxes for people they knew would benefit from a little pick-me-up during this season. This brought joy to both the givers and those who received them!



Grace Place, our youth Sunday School

Happy New Year from Grace Place,

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



Our Christmas program "A Night in Bethlehem" was a HUGE success! The kids did a great job. I am so very proud of them. We couldn't have done it without all our helpers. So, a big thank you to Mandy Andrews, Melinda Todd, Bill Robinson, Dottie Ray, Joy Boostrom, and Carolyn Thomas. I can't forget our technical crew Deb and Michael Moore.



After the program we made 35 cards for our homebound members and friends. They were delivered before Christmas.

We wish you a safe and Happy New Year!

Blessings,

Miss Chris and the Grace Place Gang



Have you checked out the Christmas Program on our website?

Each Sunday our worship service is live streamed to our website. If you are unable to join us live, the video is available for 3 months on the Worship Services page of our website.

We are using BoxCast, a service that allows us to live stream to our website and also hosts our website. Through BoxCast, we are able to see how many have joined us live, watched the recorded service and even what state they are watching from. For the Christmas Program, we had 87 watch live and have 137 views of the program from 5 different states! Along with the 120 people who braved the cold to watch in person, we can see how many support our youth at First United Methodist Church!.

Thank you for Always Praying!

First United Methodist Church has a long and strong commitment made by people willing to pray for others. Thank you for being faithful to this most important need!

If you have been praying for a long time, thank you! If, after the Body of Christ service in October, you committed to be in prayer for our church, here are a few things to know:

A prayer list is updated weekly by LeAnn Murk and is available at the Welcome Center. New lists are available every Friday morning at the Welcome Center.

Requests for immediate prayers are shared by Pastor Shelly as they are received. Pastor Shelly informs us via the Call-Em-All and Text-Em-All system.

Finally, people gather to pray every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel. These prayer times are open to all.

Thank you for being part of our prayer team at First United Methodist Church.

Call-Em-All and Text-Em-All Keeps our Members Informed

If you are not signed up to receive prayer requests and other important church-related announcements, it is easy to do so! Just provide your telephone number to LeAnn Murk in the church office and indicate whether you prefer a text message or voice message. Voice messages can be sent to cell phones or land line phones. Your number will never be shared with a third-party and there is no cost to sign up. It is a great way to stay connected with our church family!

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 I Corinthians. Bring your Bible and join us. All are welcome to come for either prayer time, Bible study or both.

In the Atrium you can find prayer shawls 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, please contact Joyce Clark at 309-299-5682.

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.

Thank you

The church staff would like to say thank you to all that contributed towards the church love gift. We appreciate you thinking of us during the holiday season.

Thank you

We would like to thank everyone that purchased gift cards through the scrip program. The church earned \$906.25 in December.

Holy Currencies Workshop – Saturday, January 10

Join us for “Holy Currencies” – Introductory Workshop, From Scarcity to Abundance: Building Sustainable Ministry Together, a one-day introductory workshop on Holy Currencies—a transformative framework by Eric H.F. Law for creating sustainable ministry.

The workshop will be held at Wesley United Methodist Church, 1212 West Calhoun St, in Macomb from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Why attend?

Pastors and leadership teams will gain:

- Fresh vision for sustainability: Move beyond financial survival by leveraging six currencies—Relationship, Truth, Wellness, Time & Place, Gracious Leadership, and Money.
- Practical tools for planning: Learn how to map your church’s assets and create flow between resources.
- Community engagement strategies: Build trust, strengthen outreach, and support cross-cultural ministry.
- Alignment with future models: Prepare for team-based circuits and hub churches with a framework that fosters collaboration and wellness.
- Immediate application: Leave with a currency flow map and actionable steps for your local church.

Who should attend?

Pastors, lay leaders, and anyone passionate about revitalizing ministry and building the Beloved Community. Together, let’s discover how to move from scarcity to abundance and create ministries that flow with grace and sustainability.

To register, please contact the church office and we will send you the link or help you fill it out online.

Position Opening

Our choir director, Adelia, has resigned her position due to health issues. Please hold her in prayer. Pastor Shelly and the Staff Parish Relations Team will work to find someone new to direct the Sanctuary Choir and Bell Choir. The Bell Choir currently rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 followed by the Sanctuary Choir rehearsal at 7:00. If you know someone who would be interested, please direct them to Pastor Shelly.

New Committees begin this month

The new list of committee members is available at the Welcome Center. Thank you for serving this year

Donations to Love Packages

We have been collecting Christian literature and now in January, our donations will be taken to Love Packages. They have two criteria for deciding what material to accept: Something that will lead someone to faith in Christ and/or something that will disciple a believer. If your material does one of those things, donate it. Love Packages collects Bibles, Christian books, Sunday School materials, to distribute all over the world. You may leave your donations in the box in the Atrium by January 11.

January Birthdays

2 Doug Harper	19 Mike Ray
7 Bruce Burgland	21 Meredith Schiffke
8 Susan Ray	23 Becki Clayton
Jean Wines	24 Garry Lemley
9 Mitch Ray	26 George Bulen
10 Jan Gebauer	27 Mason Ewing
Jason Bergren	28 Janice Boyer
14 Richard Ankle	Shirley Myers
Haley Sims	29 Peggy Sprout
16 Marilyn Perrin	30 Doug Ray
18 Gladys Albert	31 Kaitlyn McCullough



Ministry Teams

Directing Pastor - Rev. Shelly Forrest

Secretary/Financial Secretary - LeAnn Murk
Treasurer - 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 and Bell Choir Director - open
Organist - Elizabeth Walker
Keyboard - Joy Boostrom
Custodians - Doug Ray and Mitch Ray

First United Methodists Church of Monmouth

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			EVERY WEDNESDAY Prayer Group 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:00 AM Bell Choir 6:00 PM Sanctuary Choir 7:00 PM	1 Church Office Closed	2 Church Office Closed	3
4 1-2:30 pm Youth Group	5 10:00 am Advent Study	6 6:00 pm Trustees	7	8 6:00 pm Worship meeting in the Lounge	9	10 9:00 am Dream Team meeting in the Chapel
11 10:30 am Unhanging of the Greens 1-2:30 pm Youth Group	12 6:00 pm Finance meeting in Lounge 7:00 pm Ad Council meeting in Lounge	13 6:30 pm Alpha Study in the Chapel	14 9:30 am Deborah Circle meeting	15	16	17 5:00 pm Staff Christmas dinner in the fellowship hall
18 2:00 pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00 pm Piano Concert in Sanctuary	19 Youth Group to Snowstar	20 6:30 pm Alpha Study in the Chapel	21	22 5:00 pm SPRC meeting in the Lounge	23	24
25 1-2:30 pm Youth Group	26 February caller info deadline	27 6:30 pm Alpha Study in the Chapel	28	29	30	31 9:10:00 am Dream Team workshop in the Chapel on Alzheimers