

Tidings



Union United Methodist Church, Belleville, IL

May 1, 2025



Some say the church is dying.
What do you think?

I could give you all the statistics. But you know the gist. Fewer people identify as Christians. Covid accelerated the decline in church attendance. There is a growing percentage of people called "nones" with no religious identity at all. Given our present reality, former UMC Bishop Will Willimon frames the same question this way.

Are we at a Good Friday ending or an Easter beginning?

I believe it's the latter. We're an Easter people. Yes, some things need to change. We have to adapt. God will help us face new realities, accept the challenges they present, and find new and surprising solutions to stay on mission!

If the church were just facing minor changes, we might have been able to tweak this or adjust that. Instead, we're facing what are called "adaptive challenges." Adaptive challenges refer to the need for changes to move beyond the way we've always done some things.

We have to keep being a church for this neighborhood, and never make the fatal mistake of being a church for the sake of the church. What a privilege to participate in the work of a God who chooses to save the world, one person at a time, one neighborhood at a time.

And here's where I say bravo to you, Union UMC! I want to lift up two new ministries that demonstrate your willingness to move out of your comfort zones, to get out of the building, and to get into the neighborhood. Of course Union has always been committed to serving our neighbors, usually in a transactional way. If there is a need for something; we provide it. We provide it with abundant generosity I should add! This Easter we gave Douglas School families 33 Easter bags of food each with a gift card to Schnucks.

Now God is calling us to do something more relational. These two new ministries exemplify transformational ministries where we develop partnerships with our community and form relationships with the people we serve. These are considered transformational ministries in the sense that, through those relationships, we are all transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit.

First, I name the hot dog ministry. Out of the building we go, ready to offer hospitality to our neighbors passing by—either a hot dog or a prayer or both. This is way better than just a cup of cold water.

Second is the new ministry, partnering with Douglas School, to mentor children in kindergarten. What a wonderful opportunity to lovingly contribute to the development of these children, showing them kindness, offering support, exemplifying faithfulness. We'll be working to recruit mentors soon. I personally can't wait to serve in this ministry.

One last comment on Bishop Willimon's question. Are we at a Good Friday ending or an Easter beginning? I say again, we're at an Easter beginning. When Jesus met with His disciples who were hiding behind locked doors, He gave them the Holy Spirit. It's time for us to partner with the Holy Spirit in creating the church in this time. The Holy Spirit will not let us be paralyzed by looking in the rearview mirror, nor leave us on our own.

Please join with me the prayer of (my favorite) Bishop, Frank Beard. "Lord, send the gentle winds of Your Holy Spirit to blow across the embers of our hearts and fan us into flame for Jesus once more."

In Christ alone,
Pastor Allynn

3
Journey

5
**Youth and Family
Ministries**

6
UWF

9
**Birthdays/
Anniversaries**

12
Music Tidings

United Women in Faith
10:00 am
Krause Room
2nd Wednesday (not July)
*Special events posted in
Tidings and the bulletin*

United Methodist Men
Third Wednesday 5:30 pm
Krause Room

**Ruth Circle
Quilters/Stitchers**
Each Thursday 9:00 am
Krause Room

Horticulture
Each Wednesday, 9 am
Coffee, 8 am
Krause Room

Junior Church
(Kindergarten – 4th
Grade)
Junior Church is held
during the 9:00 am
worship service

NEW ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES FORMING

In response to the new Vision/Strategic Plan that gave as its #1 focus: (Developing) Transformational Ministries to Help Attain Christian Maturity, new adult education classes will begin starting Sunday, April 27th. (see related article about this) The class name is "Transforming Disciples".

The focus of these classes will be to help members striving for Christian maturity. We are instructed by the apostle Paul to work toward perfection, Philippians 3:12-14, which for the Christian is understood as striving for perfection in love and conforming to the nature of Christ. We are never "finished" learning about God's love and His desire to abide with us. Many scripture passages speak to continuing to learn: 2 Timothy 2:15 - "Study to show yourself approved unto God..." , and Romans 12:2 - "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The classes will also strive to move from believing in doctrine to experiencing God/Christ/Holy Spirit in our hearts and living according to God's will for our lives.

Stay tuned to more about future classes!!!



If you have submissions for the **July Tidings**, please send your info to Zona Ludlum by June 27:

lanecclass@gmail.com

Union UMC live stream services

9 am service:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Kent5122>

or later through YouTube

Union United Methodist Church,
Belleville, Illinois

11:15 service:

<https://www.facebook.com/CrosswalkUnionUmc>

Tidings

Union United Methodist Church
721 East Main Street
Belleville, Illinois 62220
618-233-6375

Pastor: Rev. Allynn Walker

Thel Lemons, Editor

Please attach copy to email or text the information to the editor:
chefthel@aol.com
618/530-8435

Upcoming *Tidings* deadlines (12 pm):

May 30
June 27 (Zona edits)
July 25

Outreach Committee Update



"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." - 1 Peter 4:10

- **40 Days 40 Items Challenge** Thank you to everyone who participated in our 40 Days 40 Items challenge during Lent. Your generous donations of clothing, household goods, and essentials will bless families in need in our community.
- **Midwest Diaper Drive** We are grateful for the many donations to our Midwest Diaper Drive. Your contributions of diapers and wipes will bring comfort and support to local families facing hard times.
- **Easter Food Baskets for Douglas School Families** Because of your kindness, we were able to provide 33 Easter food baskets to families at Douglas School. These baskets were filled with canned goods, boxed meals, fresh food, and Easter treats bringing joy and nourishment to their homes.
- **Sack Lunch Ministry & Food Pantry** Our sack lunch ministry and food pantry continue to serve our neighbors in need. Your donations and volunteer hours help us offer a meal, kindness, and hope to those who need it most.
- **Our Outreach Committee Team** We give thanks for our church family and our faithful Outreach Committee team. Your prayers, donations, and service make a meaningful difference every day. Interested in getting involved? We welcome new volunteers and fresh ideas! Contact the church office or a member of the Outreach Committee to learn more.

Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in our community.....The Outreach Committee



JOURNEY CHURCH

900 NORTH STATE STREET, FREEBURG, IL 62243
618-710-0224 WWW.JOURNEYUMC.ORG

Continuing the Journey *What's Happening in Freeburg*

As I write this on Easter Monday, my heart is so full. We had 57 at Journey for Easter – FIFTY SEVEN – that's DOUBLE the normal attendance we have on a Sunday morning! I was simultaneously giddy and tired going into it. Let me tell you why....

We've been practicing a new song, "Count 'Em" (Brandon Lake) that is really a different style for us. We learned on Palm Sunday that one of our new members Dan Yearian wanted to be baptized on Easter. By immersion. We weren't set up for that. We had an extra service on Good Friday. We also planned to have Communion on Easter. The original weather forecast was daunting. As a person who sometimes struggles with anxiety, this all felt a little stressful. But here's what happened:

- We prayed. A lot.
- We practiced. Also a lot.
- We invited people. The three people I thought to invite had other plans, but I was obedient in asking.
- Pastor Mike ordered a horse trough and some towels. The trough was cleaned and tested for leaks.
- Jenny ordered lilies.
- After the Good Friday service, we put away the thorns, and got out Easter banners and the horse trough. We don't have an altar guild. It's just all hands on deck.
- There were a record number of screens (for the projection)
- We prepared communion elements, food, and lots of coffee to share
- The weather was calm and dry
- I posted in a Facebook community group that we were having a Good Friday service. I didn't get any response from that, BUT about an hour later someone in the same group posted that she was looking for a place to attend on Easter. I responded, we ended up messaging back and forth, and she came! I wish I could tell you her story, but all I can tell you was this was a victory. It turns out she knows other people there already.
- Someone who has been battling a debilitating health issue was there for the first time since early March. Another victory.
- Dan was baptized. It felt like a miracle!
- Several families brought extra people.
- My sons Daniel and Noah brought a 1:37 ½ Lego model of Journey (look for a photo on our Facebook page) that they worked on for several weeks. The details are so fun!

We are tired, but joy-filled. Pray for your ministry staff and their families. So much goes into every service. This is even more true on special days.

It's all for Him.

"Cathy O"
Cathy Obernuefemann
Journey Worship Leader

EVERY WEEK

- Worship - Sundays at 10:15 am with Pastor Mike Olson
- Bible Study – most Wednesdays (not first Wednesdays) at Journey at 6:00 pm
- Youth Group - Sundays at 6:00 pm with Jenny Olson 618-979-3937 or jolson@nashville-k12.org (see calendar below for current date / time changes)
- AA and Al-Anon - Thursdays at 7:00 pm; Contact Eric G., 618-406-0366

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

May 7 – First Wednesday Meal: Taco Night, 6 pm
May 21 – Lunch Bunch, 11 am – 1pm





The sign-up for altar flowers is now available in the Welcome Center (look for yellow folder).

Arrangements are \$25 and you may take them home with you after the service.

You may sign up for as many Sundays as you wish.

Liturgists needed for the 9:00 worship service



To volunteer to read scripture, please contact Lisa Koerkenmeier at koer1922@gmail.com or 618-979-2085 (always leave a message).



Join us for coffee and fellowship in McKinley Hall following 9:00 am worship.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

As part of the Visions Plan for Union UMC, one of the Strategy Statements in Key Area #2 states: *Develop a diverse arts program to attract families and individuals to attend shows at Union.*

In order to accomplish this, we are seeking members to serve on a Fine Arts Committee. If you would like to help, or find out what is involved in serving on this committee, please contact Judy Woodruff at 618-791-5655 or woodruff74@charter.net.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this request.



Join us on Wednesday evenings, 6-8 pm
McKinley Fellowship Hall

Bring yourself, friends, snacks & your portable hobby!

Call Becky Keiser with questions: 618-795-0317

The Illinois Great Rivers Conference approved the Outreach Committee's application to their "Just Do It" initiative, granting Union UMC \$4,000 of the \$8,000 grant that we applied for!

We have notified the principal of Douglas School, Geoff Schwalenberg, and social worker, Kristin Trapp (a member of Union UMC), and we will soon begin planning for the start of the new school year in August.

Please consider becoming a mentor to a kindergarten student at Douglas. If you would like more information on becoming a mentor, contact:

Laura Koehler, koehlerlaura73@yahoo.com or Joe Milton, joseph.milton@att.net

SAVE THE DATE

VBS

This year's VBS is **Wonder Junction Marvel at Jesus, Live for His Glory**



Theme verse: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!" Psalm 113:3

Date: Sunday, June 22 - Friday, June 27
Time: 6:00-8:00 pm
Free



Meetings are held on the 4th Sunday of the month from 10:00 – 11:30 in the MOMSConnect Room on the 4th floor

May 18 – Schedule for 2025-2026

Raise Right

Order: May 4; Pickup: May 11

NO orders in June; program will resume in July

10:00 - 10:15 at the Welcome Desk (check or exact cash)

Please visit RaiseRight.com for a full list of retailers, or contact Stephanie Pierce at 618-406-7960 for more information.



Family Ministry Events: May 2025 - July 2026

YOUTH

May 4: Mission Trip Meeting

May 18: End of School year party

June 1 - 6: Mission Trip (La Center, KY)

June 15 - 20: Little Grassy Air Camp

6th - 12th grade

Leave at 11:30 AM on Sunday, return 4 PM on Friday

July 20: Nerf Gun Party

Youth room

3PM - 4:30PM

5th - 12th grade

Bring your own Nerf gun if you have one

August 24: Urban Air

\$35 per youth

5th - 12th grade

Meet at Urban Air at 3:30, pick up at 5 PM

October 12: Eckert's Farm

3 PM – 5 PM

\$20 per youth

Meet at location at 3 PM and pick-up at 5PM

December 7: Christmas Party

5th - 12th Grade

Prizes, games

3 PM – 5 PM

January 25: The Edge

3 PM – 5 PM

5th - 12th grade

Pick up and drop off at The Edge

Supplies and snacks provided

February 20 - 21: Lock-in

5th - 12th grade

\$10 per youth

Youth room

Drop off at 7 PM, pick up at 7 AM

February 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29:

Confirmation Classes

4 PM – 6 PM

6th - 8th grade

April 5: Confirmation Sunday

April 12: Escape room

5th - 12th grade

\$35 per youth

3:30 - 5:00 PM

Pick up and drop off at Escape 618

May 24: End of School year party

5th - 12th grade

Youth room

3 PM – 5 PM

June 14 - 19/ 21 - 26: Little Grassy Air Camp

6th - 12th grade

July 12 - 18: Mission Trip

8th -12th grade

FAMILY

May 3: Family Game Night

Krause Room

5 PM – 8 PM

July 12: Splash Party

September 7: Carnival

September 27: Bunco

Youth will sell grab bags

October 26: Trunk or Treat

Set up at 4 PM

5 PM – 8 PM

November 15: Campfire Night

6 PM – 8 PM

Games, food, music, and fellowship

February 7: Paint Night

Krause Room

5 PM – 7 PM

May 9: Game Night

Krause Room

5 PM – 8 PM

Snacks, drinks, and games provided

CHILDREN

June 9 - 13: Heartland Camps (Edwardsville, IL)

- 9 AM – 4 PM (if parents drop of kids in Edwardsville); 8:30 AM - 4:40 PM (if parents drop off and pick up at Union.); St. John's UMC

- Rock wall, water time, bible study, songs and dances, archery, crafts, and more!

- Kids need to bring close-toed shoes, water bottles, lunch, towel, water clothes, sunscreen, and bug spray.

Kindergarten - 6th grade

June 22 - 27: VBS

March 14: Harvest Kid's Conference

St. John's UMC

9 AM – 2 PM

No busing for kids

1st - 6th grade

June 8 - 12: Heartland Camps

- St. John's UMC

- Busing available: 9 AM – 4 PM (drop off in Edwardsville); 8:30 AM - 4:40 PM (busing from Union)

- Kindergarten - 6th grade

FUNDRAISERS

May 4: Car Wash

\$10 car wash: park in your normal spot, Angela will drive the cars down and the youth will wash. All proceeds go to the Youth Mission Trip. We will be washing cars for both services.

August: Envelope Fundraiser

March 21: Touch of Class

United Women in Faith News May



A group of 6 ladies took the church van to Cunningham Children's Home for the Festival of Quilts on Friday, April 4. Ruth Circle provided water and snacks for the road. The weather traveling to Urbana was dry; the return trip was wet, ha! There were many amazing quilts on display. Ask Mary Philip to see her pictures. We had a delicious lunch at Cracker Barrel afterwards. Special thanks to Dave Philip for chauffeuring us. Ruth Circle has the card ministry for April.

The Central District UWF Spring meeting will be Saturday, May 3, 9:30 am – noon, at Edwardsville St John's UMC. The program is 'In the Garden;' the speaker will be a Master Gardener at St John's. If you would like to attend, please let Jenny know so we can arrange to carpool.

On May 14, at 10 am, we will have our annual retreat in the Krause Room. Laura Koehler will present a Spiritual Growth program. Lydia Circle will provide lunch. The executive team will meet before the meeting at 9:15 am in Room 407 to conduct some business. The executive team will have the May card ministry and Miriam Circle will have the bake sale May 18 following the 9 am service.

Do you have Wednesday, June 11 circled in PINK on your calendar? That is the date for the annual UWF Hawaiian Pool Party hosted by Karen Milton from 6 pm-8 pm. This is always a fun gathering – you don't want to miss it! Watch for further details!

The May meeting will be my last as your UWF President. Marjie Simms has graciously volunteered to serve as your President. Marjie is new to UWF and jumped right into this leadership position. I know you will assist/guide her as she learns the ropes. It has been my honor and pleasure to be a part of Union UMW/UWF the past 10 years as your treasurer and then as president. I wish you continued success in the UWF mission of supporting women, children and youth.

Blessings,
Jenny

"2nd Tuesday BBQ"

On the 2nd Tuesday of every month, the men of Union UMC are invited to get together for a time of fellowship, fun, prayer and BBQ! On **Tuesday, May 13, at 11:30, we'll meet at Beast Craft BBQ Co., 20 South Belt-West, Belleville.**



No reservation needed, just show up at 11:30. Questions? Contact Joe Milton at 618-235-5344 or joseph.milton@att.net.



Visit to Cunningham Children's Home Quilt Show

UWF Calendar

May 3	9:30	Central District Spring Meeting St John's UMC, Edwardsville IL
May 14	9:15	Executive Board Meeting, Room 407
May 14	10	Annual Retreat/Spiritual Growth Krause Room
May 18	10	Bake Sale (Miriam), McKinley Hall
June 11	6-8	Hawaiian Pool Party, Milton's Home

UWF appreciates everyone who donated cookies and sandwiches for the spring tea on Palm Sunday. Thanks to everyone who helped set up, clean up, filled boxes for the shut-ins, served punch and goodies....the list goes on and on.



Thank you for making this a special event.

Jo Ellyn Lynn and Sandy Patrick

JUBILATION HANDBELLS

A special thank you to the following ringers: Carl and Karen Buehler, Meghan Cordes, Sue Engel, Mardy Eisloeffel, Thel Lemons, Bonnie Moncelli, Paul Petrabor, Julie Trout, Kay Watt and Rosie Parker.



Your music was lovely! The joy is in the ringing!

Susan Botula

DINNER & THE WORD will meet the 1st Friday of the month at the home of Bruce & Marjie Simms. We will begin with a potluck dinner & then watch one episode of "The Chosen" followed by a short discussion.

June 6 (Summertime Favorites; RSVP by June 4)

Hosts are Bruce and Marjie Simms: 618-623-9279; address, 1745 St. Andrews Dr., Shiloh.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Dollars and Sense News (part 3)

This is part 3 of our series detailing how the financial management system works at Union UMC. In parts 1 and 2 we discussed how the annual budget is built and how the execution of the budget takes place. This month we will provide a look at where the Union and Journey funds are held.

Where are the accounts held? There are two primary accounts for both Union and Journey – the General account and the Holding account. The General account is used by the Comptroller to control money as it becomes available. This includes any tithes, offerings, rent, interest/dividends, donated stock/financial instruments, etc. Money is separated into individual accounts within the General account. Some money passes through while others are routed to designated sub accounts. The different subaccounts fall under the general topics that you see during the annual budget process (Outreach/Missions/Service; Worship/ Music; Nurture/Evangelism/ Stewardship, etc.) We have one Trust that is managed by an off-site Trustee who provides monthly checks based on the value of the fund. Each month the Finance Committee reviews the accounts and then reports status to the Administrative Council. These reports are available to all Union and Journey members upon request.

How is money from Holding accounts used? Each account is earmarked for a specific purpose. The youth account funds are used for youth activities such as the annual mission trip. The donations for the tower fund were held until tower work was accomplished and the bills arrived. Money in the individual memorial accounts is held pending the designation of the next of kin or after six months the memorials can be used where needed. The largest account is the building reserve fund which is used for major repairs such as roof replacement, HVAC work, and the like.

Do both Union and Journey have holding accounts? Yes, both Union and Journey have holding accounts. The accounts are similar but are set up to meet the specific needs at the two sites. Money in the Union account is not used at Journey and likewise Journey money is not used at Union.

Can funds from the individual Holding accounts be used for other purposes? Trust funds managed by outside trustees cannot be used for any purpose except as specified in the trusts. Endowments are set up to allow the interest/dividends to be used for a specific purpose. Funds managed inside the church are set up to meet specific functions and are not normally used for any other purposes. However, in an emergency the Administrative Council can borrow against these funds or, if applicable, redirect them.

Since we have a large amount of cash in these accounts do we get interest? Yes, money in the Holding accounts receive interest. In addition, endowment funds are invested in balanced mutual funds to grow the interest/dividends.

Are there any other reports or documents you use to manage funds? Good question. Next month we will wrap things up with a summary of all the remaining documents we look at.

If you have finance questions please ask the Treasurer, Dick Frette, the Finance Committee Chairman, Mike Engel, or any of the Finance Committee members.



Confirmation Sunday, April 20

JOIN THE FORUM CLASS IN MAY AS WE
STUDY THE LIVES OF THE BIBLE'S MOST
WELL KNOWN AND NOTORIOUS
APOSTLES



You are invited to join the Forum class as we discuss the lives, earthly ministries and spiritual legacies of the Apostles Peter, James, John and Judas.

May 4: Peter: The Fisherman Who Became a Saint
May 11: James: The Passionate Apostle
May 18: John: The Beloved Apostle
June 1: Judas: The Betrayer

Please join our Spring, 2025 Forum Class led by Suzanne Hutcherson, in Room 217 at 10:30 a.m.

Be prepared to participate in lively discussion where all points of view are respected and encouraged.

Everyone is Welcome!



The Evangelism Committee is raising money to build 50 beds for the **Metro East Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace**. Each bed costs \$250.00 to construct and furnish with sheets, blankets and pillows.

We are so grateful for the generosity of our church members who have donated enough money to build 34 beds! If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please make a gift to Union UMC and put "beds" in the memo of your check. If you have any questions, contact Joe Milton at 618-235-5344.

**Aldersgate
Fellowship Group**



Save the Date!

Aldersgate Fellowship Group
Sunday, May 4th, 4:30 - 7:00

Cinco de Mayo Fiesta in the Krause Room. Information to follow via email. To be added to the email list, send an email to joseph.milton@att.net.

Mark your calendar! **One Service!**

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 10 am
"Children's Letters to God",
Children's Musical



Reception following in McKinley Hall

**NEW!!!! TRANSFORMING DISCIPLES -
ADULT EDUCATION CLASS**

In response to the new Vision Plan to intentionally focus on "transformational ministries to help attain Christian maturity", a new adult class is being developed. The first class will take place the Sunday after Easter, April 27th, during the Sunday School time.

This is a 5-week video/discussion class entitled "Eternal Life is Now in Session" presented by John Ortberg, pastor, author and spiritual formation teacher for more than 25 years.

Join us as we go deeper into what it means to be a disciple by deepening our understanding of how to KNOW Jesus. Eternal life is not something off in the future after death, but a lived reality that we can grow into and affirm right now!!!

You won't be disappointed in this class content - and hopefully you will want other Christian friends to join this class with you.

Hope to see you on April 27th!
Bette Frette



Hope you all had a wonderful, peace filled Easter! We certainly had an inspiring sermon from our wonderful pastor!!

In December, we have monetary donations from **Steve and Cindy Bloomer, Bob Brunkow, Ann Braun, Linda Moyer, Jerry Sauerwein, Jerry and Skippy Turner and Bill and Julee Baysinger!**

I do not have a list from January. But in February we received donations from **Linda Moyer, Jerry Sauerwein, Bob Brunkow and Don and Elsa Eltrich**. In March, **Linda Moyer and Bob Brunkow** donated.

Thanks to all of you that help keep our Food Pantry supplied to help those who need us. And thanks to **Linda Moyer** for taking that money and using it wisely to keep the shelves stocked. And thanks to all of our workers that bag it and hand it out!! We couldn't do it without ALL of you. Blessings! *Kay MacIntire*



Acolytes that we have had in the past few months include: Lochlyn Wilson, Abby Melton, Riley Melton, Jack Howland, Madeline Hill, and Elizabeth (the Buehler's granddaughter).



SAVE THE DATE for the ImpactLife Blood Drive on Wednesday, May 7, 2:30 pm - 5:00 pm in McKinley Hall.

JUNE



BIRTHDAYS



1 Karen Kohne	16 Jack Schmitt
2 Linda Ponsler	19 Sandy Merrill
3 Mandolin Kaemmerer	Cameron Haas
4 Mark Worthington	22 Tamara Herrmann
Dave Steinkamp	23 Zoey Pierce
5 Judy Eckert	25 Dianne Burke
6 Amy Perez	26 Susan Joest
8 Deanna Graham	Frank Cappelletti
11 Grace Moon	27 Kathryn Grissom
Holle Wagner	Wally Hill
13 Cohen Merrill	28 Cynthia Bloomer
Guy Wiggs	29 Vicki Eschman
15 Paul Dintelmann	30 Jay Krumeich

ANNIVERSARIES



June 9, 1957
Robert & Linda Edwards

June 10, 1967
Walter & Gay Miller

June 18, 1976
Jim & Deb Sebol

June 21, 1969
Roger & Barbara Harszy

June 21, 2003
Ed & Stephanie Emge

June 21
Douglas & Sherry Greiman

June 22, 1974
Robert & Judith Caveglia

June 28, 1970
James & Carole Eckert



VISIONS UPDATE

Submitted by Judy Woodruff for the Visions Team

The Visions Team met April 1st to update the Visions Plan and note those objectives that have been met during the first quarter of 2025. Below is a list of the objectives that have been accomplished:

KEY AREA #1

Develop a vibrant prayer life at Union

Prayer groups have continued - before Sunday service; before Lenten services; several UWF Circles; Youth Group prays every day at 6:30 a.m.; UMM; lobby prayers; praying for confirmands; and more.

Create opportunities for children and youth at Union

—The confirmation class was held from March through Easter, culminating Easter Sunday with confirmation being held.

—Monthly outings for youth have been scheduled through August of 2026.

KEY AREA #2

Create dynamic programming for children and youth at Union

Quarterly events have been developed for the year – Family Paint Night; Youth Bowling; Family Game Night; Summer BBQ; Trunk or Treat.

Partner with area schools and organizations to develop relationships with young families

—UWF sponsored a back-to-school supplies drive for families at Douglas School.

—Provided Easter food baskets for families at Douglas School.

Develop a Shepherd Program that focuses on member presence

—Review current member list – as of January 1st there were 517 members at Union

—A “welcome gift” was created and has been handed out to visitors each Sunday.

—Follow-up with first-time visitors is taking place.

KEY AREA #3

By January 2025, have pulpit speaker about Christian Financial Planning (CFP)

Finance Committee has prepared talking points on CFP

Inform members on the various funds in Union’s finances

Information on Union’s financial structure appears in monthly Tidings

Manage Union’s debt

All new spending needs were presented in October 2024 for the 2025 budget

Increase contributions and external funding

A grant was applied for and received for program at Douglas School

Provide education on Estate Planning

Pastor Ed Weston provided a presentation April 27 on Estate Planning.

KEY AREA #4

Communications Team was created in February

The team created an interim plan to keep communications efforts moving forward. Angela Rawson’s hours increased to 30 per week to add the Communications Team as part of her duties.

The Visions Team will meet every quarter to update the accomplishments in the Visions Plan. If you have questions or comments, please contact Judy Woodruff at 618-791-5655 or woodruff74@charter.net. Thank you for your prayers and support.

75 Years and Counting

Methodist Bishop In Favor Of Merger For New Church In City

The bishop came to Belleville. Ostensively J. Ralph Magee, Bishop of the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church, traveled from Chicago to commemorate the centennial of the dedication of the First Methodist Church sanctuary. But Magee had a more urgent objective. Like H. G. Hurley, District Superintendent of the East St. Louis District, he believed that the resources of Methodism in Belleville were not

being used efficiently to advance the faith.

Belleville had two downtown Methodist Churches located just three blocks apart. Historically there had been a good reason for two separate churches. First Methodist Church, which was organized in 1836, served the English-speaking congregation, while the church on Jackson Street founded in 1848 spoke to the needs of German speakers. After 1918, however, when the German Methodist Church switched to the use of English and became the Jackson Street Methodist Church, the practical need for two churches so closely located dwindled. Nevertheless the separate identities of the two churches remained robust.

On Sunday morning, January 8, 1950, Bishop Magee officiated at First Church's celebratory service honoring the sanctuary's centenary. In the afternoon he met with the official boards of First and Jackson Street, laying out his vision for Methodism in Belleville. He said the two churches were duplicating effort to little effect. Church cooperation rather than competition would improve religious life in Belleville. He advocated church merger. The church boards agreed to consider uniting. Despite their distinct separate identities, the two congregations merged four months later. Careful planning was key to this successful outcome.

Church leaders realized that merger was possible if members of each congregation believed that there was parity between the churches. A merger committee exemplifying parity developed a union plan. The committee consisted of five members from each church. It was led by two co-chairs who were the chairmen of each church's official board. They presided at alternate meetings of the merger committee.

The first decision of the first meeting of the committee on April 3 was to request that Bishop Magee appoint "one good man" to be pastor of the unified congregation. The pastors at the existing churches would go to new assignments. The new congregation would have a new name, "Union." The committee developed a merger plan in less than a month. Union's board of trustees would consist of four trustees from each of the existing boards, and this new board would select a ninth member. Union's Board of Stewards would be made up of 10 stewards from each of the parent churches. Initially the former First Methodist building would host Sunday morning worship, while the evening service would be at Jackson Street. The committee moved quickly so that the new pastor and the incumbent pastors could be at their new assignments on June 1 when the new church year began.

The merger committee completed its work in just over a month. On May 10, 1950 church members met in their respective churches to vote on the proposal to unite. The vote was completed first at First Methodist. First's church bell rang to announce that union had been approved. Then that congregation waited. A short time later church members heard the bells at Jackson Street peal the news of approval. The members at First adjourned their meeting and walked to Jackson Street to worship as a unified body. The only piece of the merger plan missing was the selection of a pastor. On May 28 Bishop Magee announced the appointment of Winfield Hanbaum as Union's first pastor. The Hanbaum family arrived in Belleville on June 1, and Reverend Hanbaum led Union Methodist's first worship service on June 3, 1950. Seventy-five years later the mission continues.



Confirmation Sunday

We Can Do It

What an exciting time to be at Union! Our church has begun an adventurous journey with our new Vision work.

We are called by God's Spirit to go out of our doors onto Main Street and to meet our neighbors where they are. They're just outside our doors, walking down the sidewalk in front of our church on a Saturday around lunchtime. But how do we reach them?

How about offering them a free hot dog and water as they walk by? As they "doctor up" their hot dog with ketchup and mustard, what about asking them if they have anyone or anything that they want to pray for? And then bowing our heads and praying a simple prayer with them?

Our Free Hot Dogs Project will begin again in May - late June. Look into your heart and see if you are able to offer 2 hours on a couple of Saturdays in May or June. Please contact Julie Callaghan at gidelgirl@gmail.com or (314) 397-3334.

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40b).

!!!!ATTENTION ALDRSGATE FELLOWSHIP!!!!

Dear Friends,

Let me give you a little of the history and intention of this wonderful Aldersgate Fellowship. Back in 2008, I suggested starting a fellowship group and, with Pastor Ed's endorsement, we had a chocolate bar extravaganza to kick off the group. At that time we had five active adult Sunday School classes: Forum, Seekers, Wesley Bible Study, Quest, and Wellspring. Fellowship groups are historically part of the Sunday School movement in the early 20th century - classes weekly with occasional social times outside the church.

Unfortunately, time has passed and our Sunday School for adults has significantly diminished. In our church we are blessed with meaningful worship, strong preaching, and many outreach and community service opportunities. However, most adults in our church are not involved in a small study group. Remaining engaged with Christian scriptures, discussing points of belief and practice, regularly engaging with other Christians in a meaningful way is very important to our transformation into disciples and moving along toward Christ-likeness and perfection in love.

I have found an amazing 5-week video/discussion series entitled "Eternal Life is Now in Session" led by Rev. John Ortberg. No book necessary - just viewing of his presentation followed by some pertinent discussion questions. Please consider attending this SHORT-term class. We will begin Sunday, April 27th, and will meet in the Choir Practice Room beneath the sanctuary. We will begin at 10:30 the first week so we can say fair well to Jenny and John Johnson.

Please consider joining this short but very meaningful class. Blessings,
Bette



Visitation and Other Good Stuff with Dr. Joe Scheets

May

A Good Reason to Be A United Methodist Christian

"How?" or "What?"

Those seem to be the choices offered by many churches.

The first emphasizes action, with sermons frequently along the lines of Three Things to Do to Save Your Marriage. *Do this and live.* (see Leviticus 18:5)

The second can be heavily belief-based, with sermons stressing giving assent to certain theological assertions and prescribed tenets. *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.* (see Mark 9:24)

None of this is new. What is remarkable and even revolutionary in 2025 is what we inherited from John Wesley: not an either/or Christianity but a both-and Christianity.

Let's go. Bishop Rueben Job brilliantly summarized what he called Wesley's Three Rules ---

Do no harm
Do good
Stay in love with God

--- and long ago someone codified ideas from Mr. Wesley's many published sermons ---

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

Whaddya Know? And yet those calls to action were predicated upon the idea of what we now call *bringing your brain to church*, or as I like to say, *use the good sense God gave you.*

The earliest Methodists were derogatorily called "Bible Moths" because of their studious approach to Scripture. Their soil was the rigorous academic world of their day and place. They started with what we'd call classic theology and developed fresh interpretations with the leadings of The Holy Spirit. But they didn't stop there. Their beliefs were only the beginning.

What Wesley said in his sermon Catholic Spirit can be expressed as, "If your heart is as my heart, let's shake hands and work together for the Kingdom of Christ." Amen?

So. As United Methodist Christians, we don't dissect our shared faith into "How?" or "What?"

Instead, we look at those two distinctions and say, "Yup! And because of what we believe, and what we believe our Lord's calling us to do, there's work to be done...come on!"

That combination's one reason I'm a United Methodist. How about you?

As always, I'd love to hear from you anytime for any reason.

Yours in Christ,
Joe

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*Let the peace
of Christ rule
in your hearts.*
- COLOSSIANS 3:15

Our thanks to Julie Petraborg for directing the children's musical and the children's choirs and to Susan Botula for directing the handbell choir.

We appreciate your sharing your talents and providing such wonderful worship experiences at Union UMC!



CROSSWALK

Sundays at 11:15
Chapel

<https://www.facebook.com/CrosswalkUnionUmc>

MUSIC TIDINGS



O Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the earth, his wonders among all the people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised. Psalm 96: 1-3

SUNDAY, MAY 4

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem: "Celtic Communion" - Hayes
Pennywhistle: Allison Niesen
Rev. Walker's sermon:
"Do You Believe You Have Eternal Life."; 1 John 5:6-12
Communion



SUNDAY, MAY 11

10 am - "Children's Letters to God", Children's Musical;
One Service
Reception following in McKinley Hall

SUNDAY, MAY 18

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem: "The King of Love My Shepherd - arr. Nolte
violinist: Philip Tinge
Rev. Walker's sermon: "Is He Your Shepherd?"; Psalm 23

SUNDAY, MAY 25

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem:
"My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" -arr. Helvey
cellist: Ethan Edwards
Rev. Walker's sermon: "Count on the Shepherd"; Psalm 23 (NRSV)

SUNDAY, JUNE 1

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem:
"I Come With Joy, A Child of God" - Wren/Marcus
flutist: Cheryl Schaeffer
Rev. Walker's sermon: "Stay Close to the Shepherd"; Psalm 23 (AMP)
Communion