



# Hometown HOLLY DAYS

December 6, 2025



## EVENTS ON THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE

9AM-4PM: CHRISTMAS MARKET @ HARLAN HALL  
10AM-7PM: FOOD TRUCKS  
10AM-2PM: BOUNCE HOUSES ON COURTHOUSE LAWN  
10AM-2PM: PHOTO OPS W/ DISNEY & FROZEN CHARACTERS  
11AM-9PM: ICE SKATING RINK (ALSO FRIDAY 4PM - 9PM)  
10AM-2PM: POLAR EXPRESS DEPOT IN FRONT OF MARSHALL PUBLIC LIBRARY  
12PM-4PM: THE BETHLEHEM EXPERIENCE - TENT ON 6<sup>TH</sup> ST.  
5:30PM: TREE LIGHTING - BY GAZEBO  
6PM: LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE ON ARCHER AVE  
7PM-9PM: HOLIDAY GLOW PARTY (DANCE)- TENT ON 6<sup>TH</sup> ST.  
\*\*6:30PM-7:30PM: 3RD & 4TH GRADES - 8PM-9PM: 5TH & 6TH GRADES\*\*

## EVENTS BEYOND THE SQUARE

9-10:30AM: BREAKFAST W/ SANTA @ FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
9-11AM: COOKIE WALK @ ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
9AM-5PM: CHRISTMAS TREE FAIR @ 4-H CLUBHOUSE  
9AM-CLOSE: HOT BEVERAGES FOR PURCHASE @ GYPSY QUEEN COFFEE BAR  
10AM-2PM: JULIE'S ELF WORKSHOP AND \$5 CRAFT @ FRIED GREEN TOMATOES  
10AM-12PM: CHRISTMAS CRAFT & READ WITH A RETRIEVER @ MARSHALL PUBLIC LIBRARY  
11AM-2PM: SEASONAL SIPS @ MOE'S BAR & PACKAGE  
1PM-5PM: SANTA @ THE LOG CABIN  
6:30PM - 10PM: FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS @ CLARK COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
7PM: GLOW BINGO @ AMERICAN LEGION

## SUNDAY HAPPENINGS

12PM-4PM: CHRISTMAS MARKET @ HARLAN HALL  
12PM-4PM: ICE SKATING RINK  
12PM-4PM: LASER TAG - TENT ON 6<sup>TH</sup> ST.  
2PM - 4PM: GRINCH GAMES @ AMERICAN LEGION



# THE MESSENGER

MARSHALL FUMC  
DECEMBER 2025



## From the Pastor's Pen

Grace, peace, and joy to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our coming King and our ever-present Lord.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter December, our hearts are drawn once again to the holy season of Advent, a season of longing, preparation, and deep hope. Advent invites us to slow down, to breathe, and to remember that the God who came to us in Bethlehem still comes to us today. He enters our world not in spectacle, but in the quiet places where we wait, pray, and listen for His voice. For many of us, this year has brought joys, challenges, unexpected turns, and the need for healing; physical, emotional, and relational. Yet in all of it, Christ has walked faithfully beside us, reminding us that *we do not journey alone*.

In the glow of the Advent candles, we remember that Christ came into a world much like ours, full of turmoil, uncertainty, and longing. He came as Light in the darkness, Peace in the storm, and Hope for weary hearts. And just as He came then, He comes now: into our church, our homes, our families, and into every place where His people call upon His name. Whether gathered in worship or scattered across the routines and travels of daily life, we remain His people, bearers of His presence and witnesses to His grace wherever we go.

This December, I want to invite you to approach the manger not only with awe, but with expectation. Christ is not done with us. He is forming us, healing us, uniting us, and preparing us for the work of His Kingdom in the year to come. Advent reminds us that God is not a distant observer of our story; He is its Author and its Redeemer. He steps into the real places of our lives, our questions, our hurts, our hopes, our searching, and whispers, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you."

As we look toward a new year, let us carry with us the lessons of this one:

- That Christ heals what we cannot heal on our own.
- That unity, forgiveness, and love are the marks of His people.
- That wherever we go, far from home or no farther than the next aisle in the grocery store, we go as His ambassadors.
- That the light of Christ shines most brightly through ordinary acts of kindness, courage, and faithfulness.

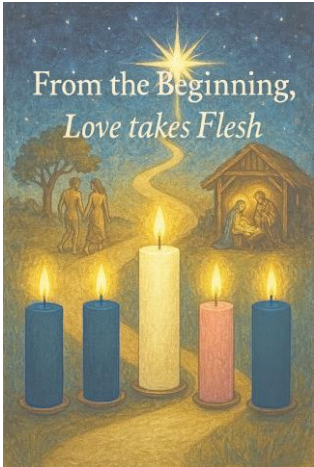
Advent points us forward, to the day when Christ will come again in glory, and to the day that is already dawning in our hearts as we surrender ourselves more fully to Him. No matter what this past year has held, or what the next may bring, we can walk with confidence because Christ walks with us. The One who came as a child now reigns as King, and He calls us to follow Him into a new year of mission, discipleship, and hope.

[Continued on next page →](#)

My prayer for you this December is simple:

May Christ be born anew in your heart.  
May His peace guard your spirit.  
May His hope steady your steps.  
And may His calling lead us as a church  
into a year marked by faith, unity, and joy.

Walking with you toward the manger and into the future Christ is preparing for us,  
Pastor Bill



**New Advent Sermon Series Starting November 30, 2025**  
Advent is a season of preparation and hope, as we remember Christ's first coming and look ahead to His promised return. We retell the familiar stories of angels, shepherds, and the journey to Bethlehem, but Christmas is far more than a prelude to Easter. It is the celebration of one of the greatest mysteries of our faith: the Incarnation. The eternal Creator humbled Himself, taking on human flesh, fully God and fully man, so that His sacrifice would be the perfect atonement for our salvation.

This Advent we will explore the deeper questions behind the manger: Why did the Word become flesh? What made the Incarnation necessary? By returning to the beginning, we prepare our hearts to truly appreciate the wonder and glory of Christmas, the astonishing truth that God Himself came near, entering His creation so that we might be redeemed. Join us for this season's sermon series, From the Beginning.



Prayer List

 Joys And Concerns: Diana Bailey, Aaron Brush, Dave Culbertson, Rev. John Davis, Mike Delp, Gail Glick, Darrell Kirby, Molly Macke, Tiffany Macke, Candy Painter, the family of Jane Illyes Peterson, Joyce Smithson, Sharon Welliver, Karen Wheat

Our Church and her leaders:

Marshall First UMC Pastor Bill  
Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai Bishop David A Bard  
Our District Superintendent, Sarah Isbell Connie Wieck and other Missionaries

Our Military Personnel:

Chris Bradford John Flowers Daniel Gard Michael Holmes John Kuhn  
Shelby Sanborn Lewis Sanborn Jake Hoalt Chaplain Jonathon Maloney

Our Nation, Our Nation's Leaders, and our Armed Forces

Our Homebound & Health Care Facility Residents

Phyllis Boatright Gordon & Carolyn Clark Violet Cook  
Dan Flowers Sharon Miller

December Volunteers

**Greeters** Chris Fitzgerald and Deb Miller  
**Ushers** Shannon Snedeker, Judi Eitel, and Larry Woodard

**Lobby Watch** 7<sup>th</sup> Rick Manuell  
14<sup>th</sup>  
21<sup>st</sup>  
28<sup>th</sup>  
**Counters** Bev Smith and Jan Ridgway

**Nursery** 7<sup>th</sup> Janet & Lindsey  
14<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Program – no nursery)  
21<sup>st</sup> Amy Daugherty & Kaylee  
28<sup>th</sup> Erica & Caroline

New volunteer sheets are in the Welcome Center! Please prayerfully consider how YOU can help serve alongside your church family.



December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Conner Sanzenbacker December 01  
Barbara Reedy December 02  
Briar Bishop December 04  
Sheila Shotts December 04  
William Schneider December 05  
James Arthur December 06  
Stephen Arney December 07  
Liberty Cline December 07  
Eleanor Macke December 08  
Blakely Trudeau December 08  
Anna Daily December 09  
Theo Arthur December 12  
Mark Bullock December 12  
Kaylee Daugherty December 12  
Lewis Goekler December 13  
Shannon Snedeker December 16  
Daniel Shultz December 17  
Brent Huisinga December 21  
Carol White December 21  
Jennifer Higginbotham December 23  
L. Moore December 25  
Novaleigh Veach December 27  
Jason Stafford December 30  
Mary Ann Stepp December 30



Tom & Anne Hintz December 02  
Brian & Tiffany Macke December 05  
Tom & Kayte Macke December 09  
Jacob & Jessica Cannady December 31

If you have been attending First UMC regularly, but haven't seen your birthday or anniversary listed in the newsletter during your special month, please let us know! We really want to have our list accurate for 2026. You can email us at [marshall1stumc@gmail.com](mailto:marshall1stumc@gmail.com) or call 217-826-8041, or simply stop by the office and tell us personally!





## Stewardship

The Joy of Generosity



As we enter this Advent season, looking forward to the celebration of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world as God's greatest gift to us, our hearts are drawn toward the joy of His gracious generosity. This time of year always brings to our minds the importance of giving. And although there are many gifts to give in this wonderful season, the gifts of our tithes and our offerings should be at the top of our mind, as we think of how thankful we are for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Last month, we said we needed approximately \$41,000 to meet our monthly expenses for November and December combined. Our congregation gave generously, bringing our needed amount down to \$28,000 to finish the year strong. Won't you prayerfully consider what the Lord would have you to give as your final financial stewardship for 2025? All gifts need to be in by December 31 to be counted for the 2025 tax year. Thank you in advance for your joyful giving and your love for the Lord and His Church.



It's that time of year to show our church staff how much we appreciate them. Please place your donation for staff Christmas gifts in the offering plate or turn them in to the office by Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to indicate that it is for staff gifts.



Thank you from your Staff/Parish Relations Committee



We have some new addresses to share with you! These folks have moved away from our community, but not from our hearts. We congratulate them both on their new homes, and wish them well.

### Laura Irwin

584 Stone Table Blvd. #224  
Plainfield, IN 46168

### Gordon Clark

c/o The Communities of Wildwood Ranch  
3222 S. John Duffy Dr, Room 118  
Joplin, MO 64804



## Kid's Korner

I can't believe we are talking Christmas activities already! But here goes...  
Mark your calendars and bring the kids:

**4:00 Sunday, Nov. 30 - Hanging of the greens and supper**

**Christmas Parade-Dec 6 @ 6:00**

*(I'll you know what time to meet at the church to ride on the float)*

**Sunday, Dec. 7- Christmas program practice during children's church**

*(If you can't attend this practice, but wish to be in the program, let me know and I'll assign you a part.)*

**Tuesday, Dec. 9 @5:00 - Pen Pals and Pizza**

*(This for kids who are a part of the Pen Pal program.)*

**Saturday, Dec. 13 @ 10:00 - Christmas program practice**

**Sunday, December 14 - Christmas program during worship**

**Dec.17 - KFC Family dinner**

**Sunday, December 21 @ 5:00 - Caroling and supper**

*(Depending on number of kids, I might need some parent drivers)*

I hope that all of the KFC kids and families will attend and enjoy our Christmas celebrations!



## MUSIC NOTES

Our choir has been working on a special Christmas Cantata, which we will share with you on Christmas Eve at our 9:00 PM Worship Service. We have a few guests from Zion UMC joining us again, too! Please make a point of worshipping with us that night to start your Christmas celebrations more meaningful.

We will also be singing at the Bethlehem Experience on December 6<sup>th</sup> at the Courthouse Square. There will be music most of the afternoon. Our choir will sing from 1:00 – 1:30. We have more carol books – anyone who would like to sing along with us would be very welcome! Meet at Harlan Hall at 12:40 to get ready.



## Mark Your Calendars:

- Dec 2-UWF Board meeting-4:00 in Chapel
- Dec 14 SW Cookie Sale after church. Free will donation
- Dec 15 SW Circle - Christmas Lunch at Evadene's

Sisters in Faith: We will not be meeting in December. but we are in charge of providing the KFC family meal on 12/17. Please come!

\*\* Sisters in Faith would like to thank everyone who bought items at our bake sale. You were very generous as always, and your donations will fund many good deeds for those in need. We hope to have mayonnaise for sale later this winter!

\*\* We have purchased Christmas gifts for two children who live at Chaddock, a 9 year-old boy and a 7 year-old girl, through the Santa Express program.

\*\* We are continuing to distribute laundry packets to the needy and are taking donations in the bucket at the Welcome Center to fund this mission. (It doesn't have to be quarters!)

\*\*We are selling the last of our stained glass note cards, Christmas cards, and key chains. You can purchase these at the Welcome Center, as well. These make nice gifts!

The Susannah Wesley Circle will have a Christmas Cookie sale on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>! Cookies and treats will be available for a free-will donation.



Flowers in our sanctuary throughout the year are often given in memory of or in honor of loved ones, by various people in the congregation. If you would like to reserve a Sunday to place flowers on the altar, please sign up on the chart in the hallway outside the Church Office. 2026 is completely open as of the printing of this newsletter!

Also, it's time to order poinsettias for the Christmas Season. An order form will be in the bulletin on November 30 and December 7. If you would like to order, but are not going to be there one of those two days, feel free to stop by the church to place your order in person. Someone will be in the office Monday - Thursday each week (other than on Thanksgiving Day) from 9:00am - 1:00pm.



will be the religious focus and second will be the traditional. The capital city has already exploded in Christmas trees, lights, carols played in malls, Santa hats, and holiday clothing for all ages. Our students have no clue what the holiday means, mostly as this is a predominantly Buddhist and animists (worship of spirits) country. They just like the excitement of it all.

Here at the Center, I consider it my task as a Christian and an educator to carefully inform, especially when students are surrounded by the visuals of the holiday but ignorant as to the meaning. After the classroom lessons, our holiday unit will come together for our Deck the Halls Activity Night on December 4. Students, their siblings, parents and invited friends, will gather in the main hall, where our lighted trees await them. Like last year, we'll have stations with various decorating tasks outlined for students to enjoy: Christmas tree ornament making, creating paper rope chains, and cutting out snowflakes. They can place their decorations wherever they wish, even taking some home if they'd like.

I'm adding gift wrapping this year.

Students will be wrapping, tagging and giving as gifts red apples. The Christmas apple is a holiday symbol for Santa Claus, coming from the Alsace region which is located in northeastern France. What better way to help students understand our Christian giving spirit than for them to participate as gift-givers themselves. Each student will be preparing 3 apples: one for a school teacher, one for a relative and one for a friend. I'm expecting more than 50 participating, which means purchasing quite a lot of supplies. Apples, by the way, are not cheap in Laos as they are imported from China and Thailand.

Those of you who have contributed to the Center in the past, by giving to the church office to send in for the Center's Advance # 3021548, has led me to be able to truly go all-out for Christmas this year. I've calculated \$310 for our 2025 celebrations, which will include ordering 200 apples through a local market seller. If you'd like to help replenish that fund for 2026, please feel free to ask the church office the procedure needed. (There's a recent list of Center expenses posted in the church, including the cost of re-roofing the main hall.)

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your prayers and financial support over the years as we partner together in this vital overseas mission.

May the joy of Jesus' birth renew your spirit and God's love shine upon you as you have so graciously shone God's love upon me.

Rejoice and God bless,

Connie Wieck, United Methodist GBGM missionary to Southeast Asia and member of Marshall First UMC



# Mission Highlights:

Thank you so much for all the ways you, as a congregation, show Christ's love to our community! One of the big ways we reach out in the winter is our annual coat drive.

Everyone has been so generous with coat donations so far! We have been able to help 11 Elementary students, 5 High School students, and 3 adults.

We like to have a variety of sizes available so that anytime we get a request, we can help the people immediately. If you still want to bring coats, I'm sure they will be used! Just place them on the coat rack next to the elevator, and we'll make sure they get put in the right place. Thank you again!



## Midwest Mission responds to Hurricane Melissa

You can join Midwest Mission as 25,000 meals are packed to feed 150,000 people in Jamaica.

When Hurricane Melissa — a Category 5 storm — made landfall in Jamaica Oct. 28, it left behind devastation: flooded communities, destroyed homes, and power outages across the island.

Midwest Mission's partners at Food for the Poor are on the ground and have shared that food is the greatest need right now.

Midwest Mission is responding by sending a container of Rice and Soy Blessing Bags to Jamaica — enough to feed 150,000 people.

You Can Help by donating to supply Blessing Bags. Each Blessing Bag meal costs just \$2 and feeds 6 people. Every dollar helps. \$24 feeds 72 people; \$50 feeds 150 people; \$150 feeds 450 people; and \$300 feeds 900!

Your generosity today helps ensure families in Jamaica have food in the wake of disaster. Make a note in the memo line of your check specifying "Midwest Mission" or send a check directly to Midwest Mission Distribution Center at 1001 Mission Drive, Pawnee, IL 62558.



In addition to specific ministry giving, we as a United Methodist congregation give to support a portion of the Conference budget, which includes ministries in Illinois, the United States, and the world. These ministries include things such as youth camps, pastoral training, health and welfare agencies, scholarships, our Conference staff (superintendent, Rev. Sara Isbell, and our bishops) here in Illinois, world missions such as United Methodist Committee on Relief, missionaries such as our own Connie Weick, Africa University, AIDS medications in Africa, and many more too numerous to name. The Conference has asked that our local church contribute \$31,956 for the year. Thus far, we

have given \$15,206, leaving **\$16,750** that we would still like to send to support the mission and ministries of the United Methodist Church. Please prayerfully consider what the Lord would have you give toward apportionments in addition to your regular tithes and offerings and special end of year gifts.



## **HANGING OF THE GREEN**

**SUNDAY, November 30, 2025**

Join us at 4 p.m. on Sunday afternoon to decorate the church and begin the Advent Season.

Supper will be at 5:15 PM. Hot dogs and Sloppy Joes will be served.

Table service and drinks will be furnished.

Christmas carols after dinner.



Holy Grounds Coffee Group meets every Tuesday. All are welcome to join! Here's where you'll find us:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Betty Jane's in Paris – leave the church at 11:30 or meet us there at noon.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Holly Brook – 2:00 PM
- 16<sup>th</sup> Gypsy Queen – 9:00AM
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Marshall Family Restaurant – 9:00AM (change from first Tuesday)
- 30<sup>th</sup> Gypsy Queen – 9:00AM



*In all the hustle and bustle of this busy time of year,  
Don't forget the TRUE Reason for the Season.*



# DECEMBER 2025

| SUNDAY                                                                                                                | MONDAY                                                               | TUESDAY                                                                                                                                                             | WEDNESDAY                                                                                                                           | THURSDAY                                                                                                              | FRIDAY                       | SATURDAY                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>November 30</b><br><br>Noisy Offering Sunday!<br><br>Hanging of the Green 4pm                                      | December 1<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am                                   | 2.<br><br>Holy Grounds – 11:30m<br>@ Betty Jane in Paris<br><br>UWF Board -4pm                                                                                      | 3.<br><br>Weave from 10am-Noon<br><br>Power Lunch<br><br>KFC 3:00 – 5:00pm<br><br>Choir 5:00pm                                      | 4.                                                                                                                    | 12.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am  | 6.<br><br>Breakfast with Santa<br>9am-10:30am<br>Marshall Hometown<br>Holly Days /<br>Bethlehem Experience<br>12am-4pm |
| 7.<br><b>Communion Sunday</b><br><br>Kids' Christmas Practice<br>During Children's Church<br><br>Youth Fellowship 5pm | 8.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am                                           | 9.<br><br>Holy Grounds – 2pm<br>@ Holly Brook                                                                                                                       | 10.<br><br>Weave from 10am-Noon<br><br>Power Lunch<br><br>KFC 3:00 – 5:00pm<br><br>Choir 5:00pm                                     | 11.                                                                                                                   | 12.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am  | 13.<br><br>Kids Program Practice<br>10:00am                                                                            |
| 14.<br><br>Kids Program<br>during service<br><br>Youth Fellowship 5pm                                                 | 15.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30 am                                         | 16.<br><br>Holy Grounds – 9:00am<br>@ Gypsy Queen                                                                                                                   | 17.<br><br>Weave from 10am-Noon<br><br>Power Lunch<br><br>KFC 3:00 – 5:00pm<br><b>Family Dinner at 5pm!</b>                         | 18.                                                                                                                   | 119.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am | 20.<br><br><i>Come volunteer at the Thrift<br/>           Shop from 8:30-12</i>                                        |
| 21.<br><br>Kids and Youth Christmas<br>Caroling 5pm                                                                   | 22.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30am<br><br>Susannah Wesley Circle<br>11:30am | 23.<br><br>Holy Grounds – 9:00am<br>@ Marshall Family Rest<br><br><i>Come volunteer @ the Food<br/>           Disbursement Center<br/>           from 12-4:30pm</i> | 24.<br><br>Christmas Eve<br><br>7pm Family Service<br>9pm Regular Service<br><i>Communion will be<br/>           served at both</i> | 25. <b>Christmas Day</b><br><br> | 26.                          | 27.                                                                                                                    |
| 28.                                                                                                                   | 29.<br><br>Exercise- 8:30 am                                         | 30.<br><br>Holy Grounds – 9:00am<br>@ Gypsy Queen                                                                                                                   | 31.                                                                                                                                 |                                  |                              |                                                                                                                        |