

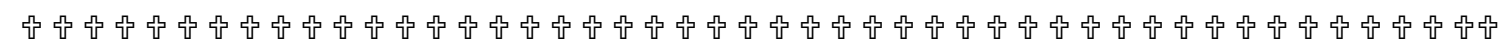
The Baby Fold in Normal, Illinois was founded in 1902 when Nancy Mason of Normal opened her home as a community home for retired deaconesses of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The retirees in turn started a home on the premises for orphaned children. Baby Fold has remained a mission outreach of the Methodist Church throughout the years. Its purpose is to provide services to women, children and families .

It is said to be the largest child welfare agency in the state, offering 250 specifically trained staff members that help families heal and grow. Agency vehicles log over 500,000 miles each year to deliver quality care directly to homes as well as on site services. Baby Fold is yoked with 4 other United Methodist child and family care agencies, Cunningham Home, Champaign; Lessie Bates Neighborhood House, East St. Louis; Spero, Mt. Vernon and Chaddock School ,Quincy.

Baby Fold offers a large range of services that extend into 19 counties in Illinois :

1. Adoption support and follow up services
2. In home help for families at risk of losing their children
3. Summer Camp for children at East Bay United Methodist camp at Lake Bloomington
4. A Caregiver Connections program to train and support caregivers in the region
5. Training and consultation for local and district public school teachers who deal with high-risk children
6. Founded and operates Hammitt School , a child development center for emotionally and behavioral disorders , currently with 190 students 3 years to 21 from 40 Illinois school districts
7. Offers a separate school for autistic children , housed in several classrooms at Hammitt School
8. Offers a Community Schools service that embeds social workers in local elementary schools
9. Conducts Healthy Start home visits for new parents
10. Offers continuing education aid for staff members to achieve certification as Special Education teachers

Baby Fold continues its connection to the United Methodist Church by providing spiritual guidance to staff and families as requested by them and funded by our mission giving.



Grace, peace, and joy to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The new year is upon us! It is hard to believe 2024 is already past and we are on to 2025. 2024 was a year of great turmoil in the world with wars breaking out and rumors of the possibility of spreading conflict throughout other regions, political unrest in the world, and political divide in our country. You add to that church conflict and family troubles, and it is no wonder many people have asked me if we are in the last days. And the answer I give is the same one I have been giving throughout my 32 years of pastoral ministry, "Yes, but..." On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter proclaimed that we had entered the last days." So, these are indeed the "last days" and all of us should be alert, like our Lord has called us to be. But it does not mean we should be worried or so concerned that it keeps us from getting on with God's purposes for our lives. We are to live each day as if the Lord will return today, while at the same time live and plan as if He will tarry another thousand years.

In these last days, God continues to give us glimpses of the peace, joy, grace, and hope He alone can offer through Jesus Christ. You see, even in the turmoil and troubles of this life, we are never alone. Years ago, I ran across a book by the late Catholic Priest, Father Joseph Girzone, entitled "Never Alone: A Personal Way to God". Father Girzone believed that we are partners with God in the composition of our destiny. Or, as he notes, "He turned my life into a great adventure at a time when I thought it was about to come to an end." What does that mean? We need to get our eyes off of the more difficult and troubling things of life and on to the joys He places in our path, while always keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. When our eyes are fixed on Jesus then we begin to care about what He cares about. We don't wallow in what could go wrong with the new year based on what we have experienced in the year that just passed. Instead, we focus on the possibilities of how we can partner with God in this new year to advance His Kingdom and grow in our relationship with Him and with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

What does God have in store for us in 2025? I do not know. But I do know that Christ will walk through it with us. He will be with us in all the ups and downs, joys and sorrows, wins and losses. He will be with us when new people come into our lives and when we lose those who have been an important part of our lives for years. He will be with us in times of health and prosperity, and He will be with us in times of illness and financial difficulty. No matter what, we are never alone, for our God is with us. And because He is with us, we have nothing to fear. Like every year, we will have our highs and our lows. But no matter what, our God is with us.

So, I wish you all a very happy new year! But more than that, I wish you a year filled with adventure as together we walk into the new year with Jesus, wherever He may lead. I think the old hymn says it best,

I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus; I feel His presence sweetly near; Unto me He whispers words of wisdom, that banish doubt and quiet fear.

I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus; My burden and my cross He shares, With His council guards and guides me onward, And shields me from the tempter's snare.

I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus; Content and fully satisfied; For the way is growing brighter, clearer, As on we journey, side by side.

I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus; Altho' His face I cannot see, He has said "I will be with thee always,"— His promise is enough for me.

For I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus, With Jesus, my Savior, For I am walking ev'ry day with Jesus, I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

Won't you join with me this year as we partner with Jesus in this new adventure of 2025, allowing Him to guide us as we walk with Him for His purpose and the advancement of His Kingdom.

Joyfully serving Christ with you,

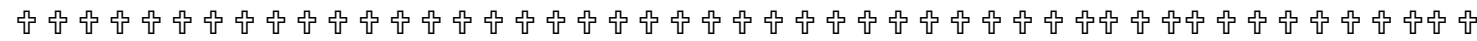
Pastor Bill



There will be a blood drive in the chapel on January 27 from 2PM-7PM.

If you are able, please come give the gift of life.





The weather is getting colder, but God's love is always here to keep us warm, and singing helps get the blood moving to warm us from the inside out! We have taken a couple weeks away from practice due to the holidays, but it's time to get back at it!

Choir practice is at 5:30pm every Wednesday in the chapel. The exception will be when we have a KFC Family Dinner, when we will switch to 6:00pm instead.

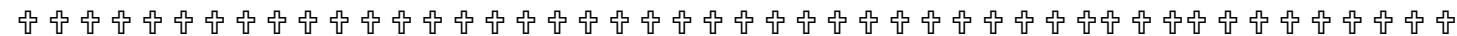
We would LOVE to have some new voices join us in this new year!

No matter your age or ability to read music, if you enjoy making a joyful noise for the Lord, it's a perfect time to step up and come see where you fit with us. If you play an instrument and would like to be available to join the choir once in a while, let me know that, too! I'm sure there are people out here in our congregation who just haven't told me of their musical gifts, and I wouldn't want to keep you from serving God as He has called you to.

I also know of a few people who have said they would come if there was something for their kids to do while the choir practiced on Wednesdays. So, if you are looking for a way to serve, but don't feel confident singing, here's a new opportunity for you! We need a babysitter or two who can commit to being at practice so the kids can be watched over while their parents sing. If you feel that you could spend an hour or so with kids, please let me know! It would be great if babysitting could be available so our choir could grow.

Thank you, too, to those who helped make our Christmas Eve worship services so special. The 5pm service was blessed by having children place our nativity pieces as volunteers read the scriptures. Thank you to the families who made that possible! Our technical crew made the slides and sound run beautifully, and having the congregation join the choir for some of the songs was a treat! It was also a blessing to have the bell choir start our 9pm service. If you know of someone who doesn't typically get this newsletter who was a part of our worship, please make a point of telling them how nice it was to have them join us. It is always a blessing to have others join us, either in the choir or for special music. I look forward to this new year of ministry with you all, to see how God will bless our congregation with the musical gifts he has shared with so many.

Serving HIM with you,



Children & Youth Ministry



Children & Youth Newsletter

Happy New Year!!! First off, I want to thank all of you for my generous Christmas gift! I not only truly appreciate your kindness, but also the opportunity to work with your children. This job has been a blessing for me. We ended KFC 2024 with a Christmas party. 31 kids attended! Thanks so much to all of our KFC volunteers-I look forward to seeing you all this semester. If anyone else wants to help with KFC, just let me know.

KFC and Power Lunch will both continue starting Jan. 8. Please check the supply list for Power Lunch in the lobby each week. It takes a lot of food to prepare for 80+ high school kids!

Our next KFC family dinner will be Jan. 22 at 5:00. We are planning a pancake supper. Remember this isn't just for KFC families but for our whole church family.

There are some changes for youth group starting this month. We will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month at 5:00 at the church. All youth from 6th grade through high school are encouraged to come. For our meetings on the 2nd Sunday, we will do a lesson, games, and supper. On the 4th Sunday of each month, we will work on a project and have a snack.

Once again, Happy New Year!

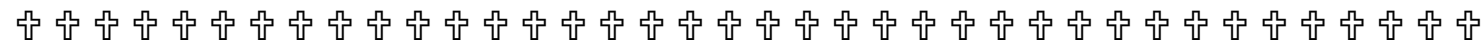


Kelly





Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Bishop David A Bard, New Orleans Victims, The Family of Mary Ellen Koutsoumpas, Gordon Clark Eve (friend of Avis), David Miller, Karen Wheat (friend of Kathy Brown), Lacy Davis (friend of Kathy Brown), Gilbert Clark (Gordon Clark's Brother), Candace Painter, Frederick Shaw (friend of Linda James), Brian Winkleman (brother-in-law of Eric Murphy), Bev Smith, Molly Macke (Patty & John's daughter-in-law), Angie Broncano (Laos missionary with cancer), Eddie Gutierrez, Mike Delp (friend of John & Linda James), Unspoken, Gale Glick, Diana Bailey, Tiffany Macke, Millie Swalls (Nora & Brad Swalls' granddaughter), Kinley Nash (Lois & David Nash's granddaughter), Bishop Frank Beard, D.S. Angie Lee, Peg Hintz (Tom Hintz's mother), Julie Krietemeier (Beth Macke's sister), Israel, All Long-term Healthcare Facilities in Clark County, Natural Disaster Victims, Our Missionaries



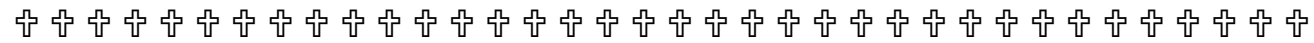
Our Military Personnel:

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

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

Our Homebound & Health Care Facility Residents

Violet Cook	JoAnn Donehue	Sharon Miller
Phyllis Boatright	Dan Flowers	Ron Hicks

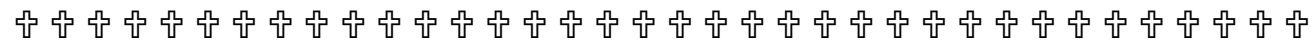


Seniors



Holy Grounds Coffee Group meets every Tuesday. All are welcome to join!

7th - Marshall Family Restaurant 9AM
 14th - Holly Brook 2PM
 21st - Gypsy Queen 9AM
 28th - Fellowship Hall 9AM



Thank you

Pastor Bill and Becky would like to thank each and every one of you who made this Christmas Season so special for us! The cards, physical gifts, yummy treats, and monetary gifts were all wonderful blessings showing the love of God through you.



Prayer Focus for the month:
**Peaceful Transition
 Of Power**



Chili Day 2024 - Thank you, our church family, for coming together to make Chili Day successful. We have raised \$3,285. It takes many volunteers, young and old, working together. With these funds, we are able to support local and world missions.

United Women in Faith

Laundry Ministry Update - We have continued to be blessed by our ministry. Just this month we were asked to help a mother of four with her laundry. It was causing problems for the children at school because their clothes were dirty. We could use your help. By donating quarters or cash to this ministry, we are always ready to answer the call for help. We have a container on the Information Desk for donations. Thank you.

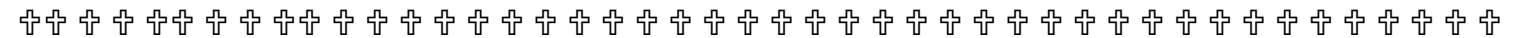
Sisters In Faith

**Mark Your Calendar:
 Weekly Events**

Weaving - Wednesdays from 10AM-12PM

Circles:

Esther Circle - Thurs., Jan. 9, 7:00 pm
 Faith Circle - Thurs., Jan. 16, 9:00 am
 Sisters In Faith - Thurs., Jan. 23, 6:00 pm



Thank you to everyone who helped with the Community Christmas Dinner. It has been my honor to organize the dinner for the last 16 years. The support of our church family has been amazing.

*This was my last year to organize the dinner. If anyone is interested in taking over, please call the church office.
 Peggy Zoll.*

*First United Methodist Church,
 Thank you for your participation
 And continued support in the
 Annual Light Parade.
 Your presence contributed
 To the event's success!
 Marshall Christmas Committee*



What A Blessing!
 Many thanks to those who volunteered at the Thrift Store and Food Disbursement Center this past year. At this time last year, we were still in our old building and praying for a successful move to a building that would better meet our needs. God blessed us with a great new facility and many hard-working volunteers for the transition. Please continue to help us with your time, talents, and donations. There is SO much to do! Volunteers are needed every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings in the Thrift Shop, and every Tuesday afternoon for food

distribution. And please don't forget to support us by shopping at the store and praying for us to be able to meet the needs of those less fortunate. God bless you!



There have been a few volunteer positions come open. If you feel led, contact the office to see how and when you can help.

Thank you in advance.

Also, the 2025 Altar Flower Chart is available in the hallway outside the office.

The Marshall FUMC staff would like to send out a special thank you to everyone for their generous donations for staff gifts. They are truly appreciated.

Anniversaries & Birthdays Celebrations

Anniversaries

Dustin & Jenna Morey 1/21
 John & Patricia Macke 1/29

Birthdays

Carrol Ellington	1/04	Garry Heighton	1/17
Joyce Gwyn	1/04	Laura Irwin	1/18
Hunter Lovstad	1/06	Amy Daugherty	1/20
Gale Titus	1/08	Russ Haenig	1/23
Jennifer Welliver	1/09	Paula Ross	1/25
Larry Woodard	1/09	Dan Flowers	1/26
Chris Macke	1/11	Diana Bailey	1/28
Jocelyn Green	1/12	Keith Lindgren	1/28
Connie Wieck	1/12	Candace Sanzenbacker	1/28
Eric Murphy	1/13	Olivia Richardson	1/29
Billy Wiggs, Jr.	1/13	Betty Rasner	1/30
John James	1/14	Jackie Titus	1/30
Angie Setzer	1/15	Lisa Welsh	1/31
Nancy Claypool	1/17		

January Volunteers

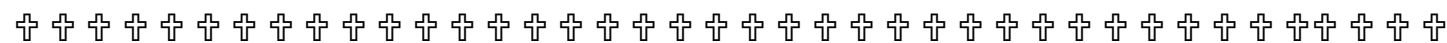
- Liturgist All Month – David Xanders
- Greeters- All Month - Robin & Holly Lake
- Ushers – All Month - Lesa and Tim Trudeau, Shannon Snedeker
- Lobby Watch – All Month - Ryan Arthur
- Nursery - 5th - Ken & Nancy Claypool
 12th - Amy & Kaylee Daugherty
 19th - Fred & Janet Eitel
 26th - Adrienne & Evangeline Hutson
- Counter – All Month – Peggy Zoll



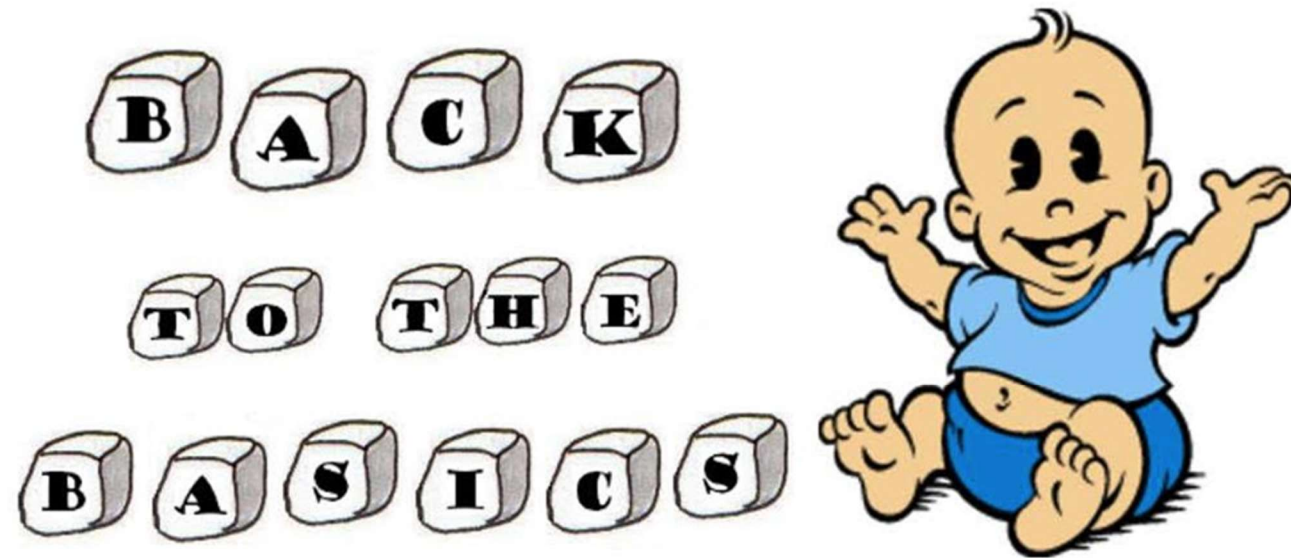
Altar Flowers

All Dates Are Open

There is a new 2025 Altar Flower Chart in the hallway, outside the office.



New Sermon Series Starting January 12th



Jesus knew the importance of building a house on a rock-solid foundation so the house would be strong. Over the next several weeks, we will form that strong foundation, block by block, as we explore what Christians believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the Church, and other topics that are at the heart of our faith. Whether you have been a Christian for many years and feel you know a lot about what we as Christians believe, or perhaps are still young in the faith, Pastor Bill's new sermon series is for you. Let's start the New Year off right by going back to the basics of our faith to gain greater understanding and grow in our faith as followers of Jesus Christ.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Local Leadership Team Update concerning Congregational Exit from the United Methodist Church

As most of you know our congregation entered the process for the possibility of exiting the United Methodist Church while retaining our properties and ministries as provided through the Illinois Great Rivers Conference exit plan. This exit plan was leading to a January 2025 vote for the Marshall First congregation to determine if we would remain a United Methodist Church or continue on with a different denominational connection.

On October 26, 2024 the United Methodist Judicial Counsel in Decision 1512 ruled that Paragraph 2549 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline could not be used as a direct way for a congregation to exit the United Methodist Church. As a result, on November 17, 2024 our Church Council Chair, Fred Eitel, notified the congregation that Bishops Bard and Bigham-Tsai ruled that the IGRC Exit Plan was not compatible with the decision of the Judicial Counsel. Therefore, our Local Leadership Team was sending a series of questions to the bishops to ask for clarification as to the meaning and impact of their decision.

We have now received a response to our questions to the bishops. The letter is a bit too long to print here, but in summary, our church has been told there is still a way exit the denomination, but we have not received the details as to the process. Since we have been in the midst of the holiday season, the bishop's office has been closed. So we have not yet received details concerning this plan. When their office reopens, we will seek further clarification. What we ask of you, is to continue to be in prayer for the ministries of this congregation as you keep up the good work of sharing the love of Christ with our community through Marshall First. As soon as we are able to obtain further information, we will be sure to share it with you.

JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1. New Year's Day Office Closed	2.	3. Exercise- 8:30 AM	4.
5. Epiphany Sunday	6. Exercise- 8:30 AM Yoga- 9AM	7. Holy Grounds-9AM @ Marshall Family Restaurant	8. Weave from 10AM-Noon Power Lunch KFC - 3PM Choir Practice - 5:30PM	9. Esther Circle – 7PM	10. Exercise- 8:30 AM	11.
12. YF @ 5PM	13. Exercise- 8:30 AM Yoga- 9AM	14. Holy Grounds-2PM @ Holly Brook	15. Weave from 10AM-Noon Power Lunch Choir Practice – 5:30PM	16. Faith Circle 9AM	17. Exercise- 8:30 AM	18. Come volunteer at the Food & Clothing Bank from 8:30-12
19.	20. MLK Day Office Closed	21. Holy Grounds- 9AM @Gypsy Queen Finance @ 6PM Trustees @ 7PM	22. Weave from 10AM-Noon Power Lunch KFC - 3PM Family Dinner – 5PM	23. Sisters in Faith 6PM	24. Exercise- 8:30 AM	25.
26. YF @ 5PM	27. Exercise- 8:30 AM Yoga- 9AM Blood Drive 2-7PM In the Chaple	28. Holy Grounds- 9AM Fellowship Hall Come volunteer @ the Food & Clothing Bank from 12-4:30PM Church Council @ 6PM	29. Weave from 10AM-Noon Power Lunch KFC - 3PM Choir Practice - 5:30PM	30.	31. Exercise- 8:30 AM	