



First United Methodist Church
127 N 4th St
Vandalia, IL 62471



Contact Us:

Office Hours:

M-W-TH: 8a-4p
T-F: 8a-12p

Phone: 618-283-3684

Email:
vandaliafumc@outlook.com

Website:
www.vandaliafirstumc.org

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December Pews News

*First United Methodist Church of Vandalia:
"Planting and nurturing seeds of faith, cultivating devoted disciples of Christ,
and feeding souls for the glory of God"*



**The Church office will be closed
December 25-January 1. Please turn in year end
contributions by noon on Monday, December 23, or
received by mail by Monday, December 30th.**

**We had a very successful fish fry this year. Approximately
350 meals were served, making this a very successful
fish fry! Thank you for your generous donations to help
with the Coats & Shoes Program!"**

—United Methodist Men



**Christmas Eve candlelight worship
service is
Tuesday, December 24,
at 7:00p . We will have morning
worship on the 29th as well.**

Church Staff

Pastor: Curtis Flake: rev.cflake@gmail.com, 217-273-4432
Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Thurs. 8:00am-4:00pm & Tues. & Fri. 8:00am-Noon
Administrative Assistants: Sue Miller & Megan Kern
Church e-mail: vandaliafumc@outlook.com
Minister of Praise Music:
Director of Choirs: Taryn Flake: taryn.a.flake@gmail.com
Director of Young Children's Ministries:
Preschool Director: Morgan Tessman
Custodian: Andy Sidwell
Family Center Custodian: Rich Well



Nursing Home Residents & Shut-ins:
Brookstone (1607 W. Fillmore)
 Diane Adams (Apt. 15); Pete & Retha Burnam (Apt. 41); Edith Knebel (Apt. 43); Larry Peyton (Apt. 16); Frank Roeder (Apt. 25); Jean Stombaugh (Apt. 32); Herb & Mary Woolsey (Apt. 32)

FCH/Long Term Care (650 West Taylor)
 Arlene Hoffman (Rm. 510); Sharon Lee; Deb Endres (Rm. 708); Margaret Carroll

Dolan Memory Care Homes
 (Dublin—11330 Dolan Way, St. Louis, MO 63146)
 Phyllis Rames
Stillwater Senior Living
 (1111 University Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025)
 Patti Bohner (temp. address is: 3402 Anderson Healthcare Dr, Edwardsville)

Shut-Ins:
 Mike Beckett, 2625 W. Jefferson St., Vandalia

Prayer Concerns

Marti Bingham (Patti Craycroft's stepmother, recuperating from brain surgery)
John Blythe (recuperating from hernia surgery)
Sara Clark ((health concerns)
Ava Cooper (10 year old neighbor of Candy Zeman, needs a heart transplant)
Steve Cox (Jane Cox's son, recovering at home)
Elaine Culbertson (breast cancer)
Jeff Endres (broken shoulder)
Willard Fulk (health concerns)
Leonard Gehle (Deb Durbin's father; prostate cancer treatment)
Ginger Hamilton (cancer treatments)
Amy Holaday (breast cancer has returned)
Heather Jones (hemochromatosis)
Carson LaDage (please continue to pray as the treatment plan is currently working)

Heather Overlin (Larry Osborne's daughter; health concerns)
David Rademacher (diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
Sydney Rosborough (diagnosed with TOS & recovering from surgery)
Gaynelle Scott (breast cancer)
Lana Sefton (stage 4 breast cancer)
Donna Taylor (recovering from a brain bleed)
Heather (Jones) Thompson (breast cancer)
Stacey Weaver (daughter of Dwayne & Laura Zimmerman)
Darin Wells (in partial remission from non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma)
Ken Williams (health concerns)
Hudson Winters (4 year old son of Jared & Lexi Winters, diagnosed with LCH and starting oral chemo)



Update on Carson LaDage
 For the past 13 years, the First United Methodist Church has supported and prayed for Carson. Carson's brain stem tumor and eye infection remain under control. Carson earned his Eagle Scout Badge just prior to his 18th Birthday which was on September 4, 2024, We continue to ask that you keep Carson in your prayers, and we thank you for your support.

Sharon and Bill LaDage

*To All of my Church Friends,
 I thank you so much for your kind thoughts and prayers for Steve and me. Through many loving hands, God saved Steve from scary situations happening. He had an aortic valve replacement and accompanying stroke. God worked through the hands of many dedicated and talented people and Steve is back home on Lakewood Drive and will be able to return to work soon.*

God Bless, Jane Cox



December



DECEMBER Birthdays

- 1— Sharon Mueller
- 2— Caitlyn Campbell
- 3— Mike Baker
Patti Bohner
Travis Clark
Angie Dugan
- 4— Barb Paine
Peg Williams
- 7— Ben Opfer
- 9— Shelly Haislar
Trisha Miller
- 10—Lea Ann Rubin
- 11—Joyce Staff
- 14—Pam Baker
Garrett McNary
Hadley Miller
- 15—Jordan Dothager
- 17—Shirley Frick
Lanee McNary
- 18—Gracie Craig
Edith Knebel
- 20—Nancy Springsteen
- 26—Amy Jones
- 27—Dana Smith
- 28—Jeanne Schlicht
Kim Well
- 29—Blaine Buente

DECEMBER Anniversaries

- 7—Sandy & Keith Ehrat (33 years)
- 12—Larry & Barbara LeFevre (54years)
- 23—Eric & Sue Miller (54 years)
- 27—Dennis & Louise Weiss (44 years)



- 1 Amelia Moulton
- 8 Trevor & Parker Clark
- 15 Haven Burnam
- 22 Noelle Milam
- 24 Addison Flake
- 29 Hannah & Brayden Stombaugh

Offering Collector

- 1 John Burnam
- 8 Barb Paine
- 15 Barb Paine
- 22 Gene Schwarm
- 24
- 29 John Burnam

Greeters

- 1 Charlene Jett
- 8 Bill & Kim Warner
- 15
- 22 Charlene Jett
- 24
- 29

Liturgist

Sandy Ehrat

Sound Tech

Rick Eyman

Video Tech

Rand Craycroft

Bus Ministry

- 1 **Driver:** Bill Warner
Rider: Kim Warner
Greeter: Jack Johnston
- 8 **Driver:** Max Durbin
Rider: Deb Durbin
Greeter: Sandy Stombaugh
- 15 **Driver:** Ed Taylor
Rider: Kim Taylor
Greeter:
- 22 **Driver:** Bill Warner
Rider: Kim Warner
Greeter: Jack Johnston
- 24 **Driver:** Max Durbin
Rider: Deb Durbin
Greeter: Sandy Stombaugh
- 29 **Driver:** Ed Taylor
Rider: Kim Taylor
Greeter:

Head Ushers

- 1 JD Vieregge/Josh Figgins
- 8 JD Vieregge/Rand Craycroft
- 15 JD Vieregge/Jacy Fulk
- 22 JD Vieregge/Greg Fulk
- 24 JD Vieregge/
- 29 JD Vieregge/Max Durbin

Ushers

- 1 Charlene Jett
- 8
- 15
- 22 Charlene Jett
- 24
- 29



Living a Christmas Life All Year Long

For the last several years, my December article has been similar. I want the joy of Jesus to transform our lives for more than just December. I want Christian people not only to say that Christmas is every day of the year but to live a life like it is true. As we enter the Advent season and look toward the joy of Christmas, it is easy to get swept up in the whirlwind of activities, shopping, and celebrations. It is overwhelming. How can we celebrate Christmas in a lifechanging way?

For most holidays I make the assertion that holidays teach us in a moment how we should be trying to live the whole year and the rest of our lives. I am not sure that I have taken this approach to Advent and Christmas. So, this year, amidst the twinkling lights and festive decorations, Advent and Christmas offer us a profound invitation: to live in a way that reflects the heart of this season, not just for a few weeks, but all year long.

How do we do this? We have to work on living and celebrating at a sustainable pace. We need to allow ourselves the grace that we won't do this perfectly and that's ok and perfection probably isn't the point. The point is to live closer to how God calls us to witness to the goodness of Jesus. We also have to decide what the Christmas season is encouraging us to do every day for the rest of our lives. This quest is clearly different for each of us taking it on, but there is a clear message: of hope, peace, love, and joy—values that can transform how we live every day, not just in December.

Year after year I feel like Christmas has ran into me. There are probably other holidays or moments throughout the year this is true. For many of us, the holidays can feel like a sprint, with too much to do and too little time. But what if, instead of running ourselves ragged trying to capture the "perfect" Christmas, we chose to embrace the season at a sustainable pace? What if we took time to truly savor the moments of Advent and Christmas, making room for quiet reflection and connection with those we love? What if we slowed down enough to hear the true message of Christmas, which is found not in the hustle and bustle, but in the stillness of a baby born in a manger? Or the hope of letting Jesus being born in our hearts?

In the gospel of Luke, we read that when the shepherds were told of Jesus' birth, they hurried to see Him, and when they left, they "glorified and praised God for all the things they had heard and seen." (Luke 2:20) For the more critical readers, the shepherds did hurry. There will always be moments to hurry but we also need to take the moments to savor the things worth hurrying for. But the main point is that they didn't rush off to prepare for the next thing or try to fill the moment with more activity. They took time to pause, to wonder, and to give thanks. I believe this is something we can learn from their example: in a world that pushes us to hurry, the Christmas story invites us to slow down, to focus on what truly matters, and to carry that spirit of stillness and gratitude throughout the year. And how much could they really hurry when they walked everywhere?

Living a "Christmas life" all year means living with intention. It means choosing to prioritize relationships, to offer love generously, and to practice kindness and patience—even in the midst of our busiest moments. It means allowing the message of Christ's birth to shape our hearts in such a way that we see every day as an opportunity to spread the peace and joy of Christmas, the story of Immanuel Christ with us.

So, my hope for all of us this Christmas is that we would resist the temptation to race through the season, and instead, allow ourselves to truly experience its beauty and meaning. And then, as we move into the new year, let us carry that Christmas spirit with us—not as a temporary feeling or a holiday tradition, but as a way of life. May we live every day with the same wonder, love, and hope that the birth of Jesus brings, and may we seek to make every moment a reflection of the light that entered the world on that first Christmas night.

—Pastor Curtis

A special thank you to all of our volunteers that do so much for our church throughout the year: Sunday School teachers, office help, Wednesday night youth group leaders, sound/video techs, musicians, ushers, greeters, acolytes, offering collectors/counters, those who decorate and keep the church looking so nice, prayer shawl committee members, coats and shoes volunteers, and many, many more. It takes many leaders to keep our church going, and we appreciate each and every one of you!



The N.O.W. Committee will be delivering Christmas cookie appreciation platters to Fayette County First Responders, teachers, and the Health Department. They need your help in providing cookies and treats for the platters. Please bring in your treats to the Wesley Hall kitchen Sunday, December 15th. Platters will be assembled and distributed on Monday, December 16th.

Thank you to Charlene Jett, Deb Cook, Addison Flake and BJ Mueller for covering traditional song leading in the month of November. Thank you to Alexa Campbell, Curtis Flake, Sue Miller, Charlie Mills and Dawn Rosborough for participating in the Praise Team. Thank you to our Spirit Singers/Chimers who performed on November 3rd: Addison Flake, George Holiday and Hudson Myers. Thank you to our Sanctuary Choir members: Alexa Campbell, Deb Cook, Patty Donaldson, Dennette Guyer, Charlene Jett, Dorothy Ann Jenkins, Jan Johnston, Sandy Leidner, Sue Miller, BJ Mueller, Sharon Mueller, Mark Paine, Sandy Stombaugh and Suzie Thompson.



As I prepare for the Advent season, I am nostalgic for the hymns and praise songs that we only sing once a year. The Choir will be sharing two Christmas anthems, as well as an anthem on Christmas Eve. Handbells will play on December 1st and then be off until January. Spirit Singers will also resume in January. Watch the January newsletter for those schedules. December Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal & Anthem Schedule:

**December 4th—4:30pm-5:30pm
December 11th—4:30pm-5:30pm
December 18th—4:30pm-5:30pm**

**December 8th—9:30am-Anthem
December 15th—9:30am-Anthem
December 24th—7:00pm-Anthem**

**Musically,
Taryn Flake**

Everyone welcome Megan Kern!! Megan has been hired to share the Administrative Assistant duties with Sue Miller.



Mark your calendars!! Our Kingdom Kids and Sunday School youth will present a Christmas program during morning worship on Sunday, January 12th, 2025. Practices are held downstairs in Kingdom Kids during the worship service.

Sign up for poinsettias by December 9th. Order forms are available in the bulletin on Sundays, or in the church office. You may take your poinsettia with you after the Candlelight Christmas Eve service. The cost is \$14.00



We will be decorating the sanctuary with Poinsettias for the Advent Season.

The flowers may be given in memory or in honor of loved ones.

Please fill out the following information if you will be providing a poinsettia and place it in the offering plate **with payment** (\$14.00), or you may bring it to the church office.

Deadline: Wednesday, December 9th.

Please print clearly. Thank you.

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

BY: _____

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to our generous congregation!! 968 boxes were packed and sent to this year's local distribution center, The First Church of God. Many of these boxes were packed throughout this past year along with the boxes you, the congregation, packed and returned.



A second load of filler supplies was also taken to the First Church of God to be used to help fill boxes once they reach the central distribution center before being shipped to the children.

We would like to send a huge "thank you" to Rich Well for arranging and delivering the boxes across town and to Patrick Myers, his youth group and Alan Lurkins for all of their help in this adventure!!

I said a prayer for you today and know God must have heard although He spoke no word. I prayed that He'd be near you at the start of each new day, and to grant you health, blessings and friends to share your way!

Submitted by:

Andy Sidwell

We Need The Following:

- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Ramen Noodles
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Pancake Mix
- Spaghetti
- Spaghetti Sauce

6:35 PANTRY

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35

We will once again be collecting funds for Zoryana Mills' family who came to the US from the Ukraine. If you wish to contribute, please indicate "Ukrainian Refugee Family Support" or "URFS" in the memo.