

Volume 24, Issue 1 January 2023

WORDS FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear friends.

By the time this edition is in your hands, the Season of Christmas will be over, and the Season of Epiphany will be about to begin.

After all the bustle and fuss of preparations, we can now sit back and take a great break. I truly hope that the necessary time was taken to spend quality time with those around us, which hopefully included family and friends.

In that sense our Christmas more than anything is, and I believe will be always center in God's gifts for us... of comfort, peace, and strength. And appreciate the time we have with those we love. However, at the other end we complain



about family and all that it entails, but in many instances like with my family, our extended family lives quiet far away and we love when their arrival interrupts our daily activities, we enjoy it all! Maybe one of the values we need to incorporate is to thank God for the family we have (when is healthy and viable) as well as the faith community we have been blessed!

Please notice that I'm very intentionally using the words "visit" and "far away." For those who are not fully aware of what Epiphany means, here is this note- "the Epiphany celebrates God's revealing or manifesting of Jesus' identity as true God, Messiah, and Savior of the world. It not only commemorates the fact that Jesus appeared to save us, but that God revealed the identity of Jesus to the world."

This is following the reading in Mathew that three "wise men" followed a star looking for the king that has been born. The aspects of Epiphany are major "points" that truly help our faith journey. They followed the light of the star; they traveled a long distance. Another important aspect is that they were not "Jews" or religious persons. Some traditions call them "magi;" in other words, gentiles. We all think that after Christmas our faith journey takes a break. However, it is more than a break, it takes another direction. If we follow the star and find the light, it is implied that there will be some transformation; some changes and I'm not talking about physical appearances, I'm talking about Christian Values. The "wise men" traveled a long distance, following a star; there was a purpose, a mission. Upon their arrival they brought magnificent gifts to Jesus, they knelt and worship God's incarnation Emanuel. They worshiped him! So, I ponder are we honestly and truthfully worshiping our Triune God? Are our values in line with our identity? I hope and pray we are not missing the point.

The Season of Light is in our midst once again, helping us to see what we need to see, helping us to realize the importance of our commitment to God and to the church. Now more than we are invited to walk each day with the realization that the Light in guiding us, but we need to do our part.

Worship is not only what happens every Sunday morning or Saturday night when we gather as the "church," it will happen every time we live out the values of our Christian faith. Every time we light the way for those who are experiencing some type of darkness in their lives. Epiphany will happen! Every time we re-commit ourselves to faithfulness. Epiphany will happen! Every time we walk and worship in whatever shape or form. Epiphany will happen! And yes, it is happening to us now!

May God guide and empower us during this Epiphany Season!

Blessings & peace,

Pastor Luis

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Securely give online at www.sycamoreumc.org/giving



It's an easy way for anyone to give immediate donations. Checks may be mailed to the church at: 160 Johnson Ave., Sycamore, IL 60178.







@sycamoreumc



January 2023 Worship Schedule

ALL SERVICES WILL BE IN-PERSON AND LIVE-STREAM **SERVICES ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE ONLY**

> Saturdays at 5:00pm; Sundays at 8:30 & 10:00am

www.facebook.com/SUMCIllinois/ or www.youtube.com/results?searchquery=sycamore+umc or www.sycamoreumc.org/live.

January 7/8 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60: 1-6 Matthew 2:1-12

January 14/15 – The Baptism of the Lord

Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism – Benjamin Jacob Landis

Pastor Bill Landis & Pastor Luis co-celebrating - Sun-

day, Jan. 15 @ 10am Isaiah 42: 1-9

Matthew 3: 13-17

January 21/22 - Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism of Kalman and Arolo Fabian

Isaiah 9: 1-4

Matthew 4: 12-23

January 28/29 – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8 Matthew 5: 1-12







Those for whom we pray:

Eric Gabriel
Diana Grace
Maggie Buie
Carole
Nancy
Barbara Drake
Tom Sanders
Diana Sanders
Jim
Linda
Howard & Sue Keller

John & Pat Sackis
Tom Snell & Family
Alice Kay Larson
Betty Lou Finn
Lois Cullison
The Dykema Family
Brooke Copeland
Regan Thompson
Kitty Hagendorn
Stephanie Landis

We extend our sympathies to the family of:

Warren Lowe Cliff McConnell Holly Rudolph

The Service Personnel and Their Families

Cpt. Mark Browning,
*SGT Ben Bushno
SGT Shaune Clark
SGT Matthew Einhorn
PFC Timothy Einhorn
PO1 Frank Incapreo
SSG Christopher Isabel
*Lt. Col. Garrett Slack
SFC Matthew "Scott" Stewart
MMN1 Frank Huftalin
LT Matthew Herbaugh
PVT Trevor Bassett

PO3 Samuel V. Bell
CPT Ed Richter

*SGT Brock Grimaldi
E4SPC Alexis Jones
E3PFC Max Keller
A1C Brock Larson

*Maj Steve Haack
PV2 Caden Grimaldi
PV2 Rachel McMillion

*CPL Joshua Caraballo
SPC Sutit Jackson

*indicates deployed personnel

Please keep your pastors and your church family informed!

As policies surrounding confidentiality and patient's rights continue to be adjusted, hospitals and nursing homes no longer contact church offices to notify them that church members have been admitted.

To insure that you desire and receive pastoral care, please call the church office, or have a friend/family member call on your behalf.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION Look in the Mirror



"Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen"

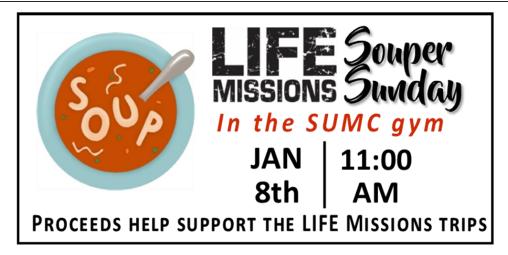
1 Peter 4:11 NRSV

This passage of scripture is saying it is you who is living out the teachings of Jesus Christ through you daily actions. You are the one called upon by God to welcome the outcasts, bring hope to the poor, and bring comfort to the sick. As we begin a new year, look in the mirror. Besides making sure your appearance is in order before heading out the door, stop and think if you are ready to present the God-like version of yourself to the world.

Your gifts to our church are helping fulfill the mission of being a disciple of Jesus Christ both locally and worldwide. The Sycamore Food pantry housed at our church is entering its 30th year of service. Last year it helped almost 1200 families which translates into more than 3,700 individuals. Meanwhile, through our United Methodist connection, your donations helped buy 38 tons of food such as rice, wheat, beans, salt, and sugar to aid victims of warring factions in the East Congo of Africa. The ABC preschool housed at our church had 100 families taking part in activities last year. At the same time, your gifts helped the first fully accredited United Methodist-related education institution on the African continent, Africa University, offer bachelor and master's degrees in such fields of study as agriculture, health sciences, and theology to raise the standard of living for people desperate for education.

So, as you start 2023, look in the mirror to see the reflection of the Lord's goodness and mercy. May it lead you to generously give to this church and put stewardship into action. Besides putting your gift in the offering plate during weekend services, you may mail a check to the church, you may give on-line at www.sycamoreumc.org, or use the QR code to get to the giving portal. Thank you for your support.

MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES



Our Nursery Staff is growing!

We have been blessed to add two Childcare Providers to our Nursery staff to lend relief and help our beloved, Kelsey Butler.

Amy Collins and Bethany Williams will begin their training with Kelsey in the coming weeks to care for the spiritual and physical needs of our children.

Please stop by the Nursery to welcome these ladies to the SUMC staff and bless them in their service to this community of faith.

Food Pantry Needs

This month's featured items are canned fruit, strawberry jelly, canned ravioli, canned tomatoes, cake mixes and toilet paper and of course monetary donations are always welcome. Let's remember that there are those who don't know where their next supper will come from.



ADULT BIBLE STUDY - Finding Life's Better Things: The Book of Hebrews This is a 15-week study covering the New Testament book of The Letter to the Hebrews.

Class meets Monday nights from 6:00pm – 7:00pm starting January 2nd and concluding April 10th.

Location of the study will be the Church Lounge.

Bring your Bible with you! There is also a Study Guide and a Class Schedule; both will be distributed at our first Monday meeting. Sign-up on the bulletin board in the Concourse or by emailing Joe Gibson at gibbyfive@gmail.com You can also register online at:

https://host.nxt.blackbaud.com/registration-form/?formId=d454b30e-59dc-463a-bb97-5286b9b1ddcd&envId=p-EnpCOn6a4EGn4NxAc0h-Pq



United Methodist Men's Pancake Supper Thursday, February 2, 2023 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased ahead from most any Methodist Men, in the concourse on Sundays or the church office. Tickets can be purchased at the door for the same price. The Pancake Supper features pancakes served with sausage, scrambled eggs, and apple sauce.

Tickets: \$9 each for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 5-10 and children under 5 eat free.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING



SCHEDULE:

8:30 am: Registration

9:00 am: Worship (with communion)

9:45 am: Break 10:00 am: Class

12:00 pm noon: Dismissal

SUMC's own
Pastor Luis F. Reyes
and Buzz Wheeler
will be presenting
classes.

For more information and to register online go to:

https://www.umcnic.org/calendar/prairie-south-leadership-training

MUSIC MINISTRY



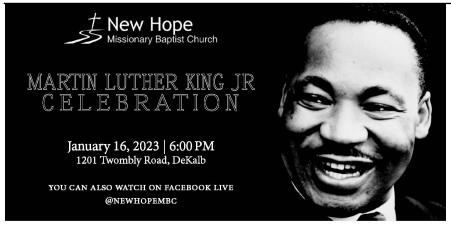
Happy New Year! So much to be grateful for in 2022 and so much to look forward to in 2023!

First and foremost, thank you to all who participated in our Christmas Cantata and Christmas Eve Services! A BIG Thank You to all who attended or viewed via our streaming! And thank you for the special notes, emails and positive words of thanks and encouragement!

Ways to serve in 2023

- Children's Choir(s) Meets Wednesday's at 5:45-6:15 p.m. in the music room. Rehearsals resume on January 4, 2023!
- Chancel Choir meets Wednesdays at 7-8:30 p.m. Reading music or formal vocal required. Just a desire to make a joyful noise. If you can carry a tune in a bucket, we'll be happy to see....we'll even provide a bucket if need be!!!
- Handbell Choir Meets Thursdays at 7-8:00 p.m. in the music room. Always looking for a few more ringers! No experience or reading of music necessary. Just a passion for making music!
- Instrumentalists Play an instrument? There are ways for you to serve in this way too!
- Sound/Video Tech's desperately needed!!! No experience necessary! We'll teach you the basics!

Any questions or for more information contact Peter Hansen, music director or inquire with the church office!





MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

ADULT MISSION TRIP MEETING

Sunday, January 8th
At 12:00 pm
in the SUMC Commons

DESTINATION: DISCIPLESHIP!



Who is a disciple? Often, we think of one of the original twelve men who served alongside Jesus over two thousand years ago. We think discipleship is reserved for pastors, church workers or leadership, anyone who has more (insert your personal word here) than me. We don't feel worthy to be called disciples. But through your love of God and/or baptismal vows, you have already begun your work as a disciple.

Disciples are those who continually grow in love of God and neighbor. Our task in this new year, this new season in the life of this church, is to seek and create new ways to grow in our relationship with God and one another.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

- Small Groups are being formed and we are looking for people to facilitate meetings. We will offer you training and resources to ensure your success, all you need is a willingness to share and listen. Please contact Becca if you are interested leading or joining a small group.
- Eat and engage in spiritual conversation at LIFT on January 11th at 6pm. Spaghetti dinner will be served! This free-will offering dinner is open to all, donation or not. Invite friends! Preregistration is appreciated but not necessary. Click the link to register: host.nxt.blackbaud.com/registration-form/?formId=1752fa83-5056-416a-88c9-2a0a5c1c6aae&envld=p-EnpCOn6a4EGn4NxAc0h-pQ
- Adult Bible Study continues to meet on Monday nights from 6-7pm in the lounge.

KIDS CORNER:

- Sunday School meets weekly during the 10 am service. Nursery available at both 8:30 and 10am.
- Confirmation Lock-In January 6-7th. Drop off at 6pm and pick-up Saturday at noon! Classes are on break this month but will resume February 1st.
- Christian Kids resumes 1/11 for the second semester. Kids in grades K-5 (MS can be helpers) are invited to join in faithful fellowship and service. We meet weekly from 4-5:30pm. Pick-up at North Grove, North, and West Schools is available. The cost for the semester is \$30 to offset the cost of snacks. Click the link to register your child: https://host.nxt.blackbaud.com/registration-form/?formId=4c545e26-042c-4482-8953-28a8642c47c5&envId=p-EnpCOn6a4EGn4NxAc0h-pQ

To quote my grandmother, "May God bless and keep you the whole new year through!" Blessings Abound,

Becca Rome

THANK YOU!

The fiving p

Thank you doesn't seem enough for the generosity you extended to our Giving Tree families this Christmas. We asked for your help to make life a little easier for those in need and you responded in kind. We put gifts under the tree for 6 families this year. Additionally, your donations supplied each family with gift cards to make Christmas dinner a reality, fill their pantries and gas tanks through the holiday season. Your kindness has unburdened these families; allowing them to breathe easier and enjoy the blessings God has provided. You answered the call for God to move through you, causing the hope, joy, peace, and love of Christ to refresh the hearts and homes of others.

Proverbs 11:25 (NIV): A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

LIFE MISSIONS



Welcome to 2023! Our LIFE Missions/programs were very busy in 2022. These programs include our middle school/ high school youth groups, our young adult study that meets every Tuesday night, the high school Breakfast and Devotions (BAD) that meets Thursday mornings, as well as the mission trips for all ages – middle school, high school SYCAMORE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH and older. All that we do is possible with the support and prayers from our church

family, friends and the community and we thank you all for continuing to give your support in whatever way you can. Below are a few things our Life Missions/programs were able to do as 2022 came to an end and we look forward to being able to do this and more in 2023:

- Help refugees by providing needed items, then loading our trailer along with your donations and other churches in the area to get them delivered to a location where they were needed.
- Help at Christmas by shopping/paying for many items from the giving tree that were needed for our families here at SUMC.
- Donated \$9000.00 to the church budget to help cover all of our expenses for youth/young adults here at SUMC during the 2022 year.

(We have had some questions asked about what the church pays for all of our mission trips from middle school age through adults. These trips are 100% paid for by all participants through their fundraising events and the amount they are asked to pay, there is NO cost from the church)

UPCOMING LIFE Missions EVENTS/MEETINGS (see church calendar for youth group dates)

January 8th BELIZE Adult Trip - Informational meeting at 12pm, if interested come hear about the trip which will be in June.

January 8th "Souper Sunday" after the 10 service, we will have 30 crockpots of soup along with salad and desserts. This is a free will donation to benefit LIFE Missions 2023 trips.

Pizza Sales will be starting in January, with our Pizza-making night at the beginning of February. We thank you again for your support and prayers for all who are part of the programs. Please also pray for our team of 23 heading to the Holy Lands January 17-26.

God Bless,

Pastor Joe

ABC PRESCHOOL MINISTRY NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The kids were very excited to be back in class to begin the year. We jumped right into our winter discussion themes and then will have a great time with our annual Teddy Bear Week!



We will be hosting an Open House for all families interested in preschool for the coming fall semester. Monday, January 23 from 9-12. More information will be coming.

PRESCHOOL

Registration for the fall begins next month. There will be more information coming soon.

ABC recycles! Give us your trash for us to make into treasures! This month we are collecting plastic! Plastic bottles, plastic tubes, plastic tubs and other things that we can reuse in our grocery themed areas, yet also are able to sanitize. Please feel free to drop these off to the Preschool office anytime.

We thank Sycamore United Methodist Church for all your support of ABC Preschool. We look forward to working together on many projects during the year.

The ABC Preschool Staff

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & OUTREACH

In December, we discussed the many opportunities to volunteer and to take advantage of the spiritual gifts that each member of our church possesses. For the next few months, I will be focusing a specific committee/group that is part of the Congregational Care and Outreach Ministry.

As of January 2, 2023, two new ministries/teams are being organized - the Congregational Care and Outreach Ministries Team (CCOMT) and the Great Commission Ministry. I will cover the Great Commission Ministry next month.

The CCOMT will provide oversight and coordination between the following church committees/groups. Representatives from these groups and ministries will be a part of this committee as well:

- Caring Ministries Network
- Great Commission Ministry
- Sycamore Food Pantry and Coat Ministry
- Good Neighbor Refugee Group
- Supporting the DeKalb County sponsored Hope Haven and Meals on Wheels

Additionally, and more importantly, the CCOMT will coordinate with these groups and other churchwide organizations such as the Discipleship Ministries; the Youth Ministry and Families Team; Worship, Music, and Arts Team; the ABC – Preschool; the Finance Committee; the Board of Trustees; United Women of Faith; United Methodist Men; and the Church Council.

The CCOMT will incorporate four key concepts as they work to ensure successful ministries and outreach for the Sycamore United Methodist Church:

- Embrace teamwork. There are no Lone Rangers in these ministries. Jesus had a team, and we need teams to help us build the community of faith we are called to be.
- **Trust the Holy Spirit**. We are never alone, and God will give us the tools we need for each situation. The spirit will be leading us in every aspect of the church's ministry.
- Evaluate, Evaluate, and Evaluate. We do not need to be afraid of change. We need to be afraid of not changing. This team will help us look for new ways to keep our ministries effective and nimble.
- In all things, pray first. Everything we do must be undergirded with prayerful discernment.

The Sycamore United Methodist Church is a caring and compassionate congregation with purposeful, committed, individuals and groups. What the CCOMT will bring to the table is a new way of looking at all this church has to offer the community from the "30,000 foot" view.

Food for thought – What is God calling you to do?

Buzz Wheeler
Minister of Congregational Care

Have you moved? Gotten rid of your landline phone?

Have you had any change in your personal information such as phone number, address, email address, marital status or name change? Have you had an addition to your family? Please call the church office at 815-895-9113 or email us at office@sycamoreumc.org so that we can update our records.

JANUARY 2023 EVENTS CALENDAR

The deadline for the February issue of The Messenger is January 19th

.SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8:30 & 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Services 10:00 AM Children's In-person Sunday School	2 12:30 PM Food Pantry 12:30 PM Coat Ministry 6:00 PM Adult Bible Study 7:00 PM Trustees	3 6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study & Dinner	4 5:45 PM Children's Choirs 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:00 PM Crew 360	5 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM TOPS 6:30 PM Pack 141 Den 5 7:00 PM Handbell Choir	6 6:00 PM Confirmation Lock-in	7 7:30 AM UMM Breakfast 9:00 AM Visioning Team Retreat 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service
8 8:30 & 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Services 10:00 AM Children's In-person Sunday School 11:00 AM SOUPER SUNDAY 12:00 PM Adult Mission Trip Meeting 2:00 PM Girl Scouts 6:00 PM Middle & High School Youth Grp	6:00 PM Adult Bible Study 6:00 PM Finance and Stewardship Committee 7:00 PM Church Council	10 9:30 AM Mary Circle 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 4 6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study & Dinner	11 4:00 PM Christian Kids 5:45 PM Children's Choirs 6:00 PM LIFT Dinner 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	12 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM TOPS 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 2 7:00 PM Potawatomi Cub Scout Round Table 7:00 PM Handbell Choir	13	14 9:00 AM Church Leadership Mtg 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service
15 8:30 & 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Services 10:00 AM Children's In-person Sunday School 2:00 PM Children's Theater Auditions	16 Church offices closed No ABC Preschool 12:30 PM Food Pantry 12:30 PM Coat Ministry 6:00 PM MLK Jr. Celebration (see page 5 for more details) 6:00 PM Adult Bible Study Children's Theater Auditions	17 10:00 AM Magic Mondays 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 3 6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study & Dinner 7:00 PM Leading Ladies	18 10:00 AM Caring Ministry Team 4:00 PM Christian Kids 5:45 PM Children's Choirs 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:00 PM Crew 360	19 7:50 AM B.A.D. (HS Breakfast & Devotion) 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM TOPS 5:30 PM Visioning Team 6:00 PM Girl Scout Leader Meeting 6:30 PM Pack 141 Den 5 7:00 PM Handbell Choir	20 1:00 PM ABC Preschool Staff Meeting	21 7:30 AM UMM Breakfast 9:00 AM Pack 141 Pinewood Derby 9:00 AM Prairie South District Training Event at Dixon UMC 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service
22 8:30 & 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Services 10:00 AM Children's In-person Sunday School 2:00 PM Girl Scouts 6:00 PM Middle & High School Youth Grp	,	24 1:00 PM UWF Missions Team 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 4 6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study & Dinner	25 4:00 PM Christian Kids 5:45 PM Children's Choirs 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	26 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 4:30 PM TOPS 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 2 7:00 PM Handbell Choir	27 6:30 PM Pack 141 Den 1	28 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service
29 8:30 & 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Services 10:00 AM Children's In-person Sunday School	30 10:00 AM Magic Mondays 12:30 PM Food Pantry 12:30 PM Coat Ministry 6:30 PM Worship Comm.	31 6:00 PM Pack 141 Den 3 6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study & Dinner 7:00 PM Leading Ladies	February 1 4:00 PM Christian Kids 5:45 PM Children's Choirs 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 7:00 PM Crew 360	2 7:50 AM B.A.D. (HS Breakfast & Devotion) 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 4:00 PM TOPS 4:30 PM UMM Pancake Supper 5:30 PM Visioning Team 6:30 PM Pack 141 Den 5 7:00 PM Handbell Choir	3	4 7:30 AM UMM Breakfast 5:00 PM Saturday Worship Service 8:00 PM LIFE Missions Pizza Making

Church office Hours: Monday thru Thursday - 8:30 am to 3:30 pm; Fridays - 8:30 am to 12 Noon