



The Messenger

SYCAMORE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

July 2026

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

July 13-17 from 9-Noon - Vacation Bible School
July 22 at 11:00 am - Summer Book Study begins
July 26 from 11am-1pm - Float Fundraiser PICNIC
August 2 at the 9:30 service - Summer Chancel Choir
August 16 at the 9:30 service - Blessing of the Backpacks
August 14 & 15 - UWF Thrift Sale
September 6 - Kick off Sunday

PUMPKIN FEST
FLOAT FUNDRAISER PICNIC
SUNDAY, JULY 26
11AM - 1PM
Table service will be provided.
Free will donation
WILL GO TO HELP DEFRAY
THE COST OF THIS YEAR'S FLOAT.

BRATS
HOT DOGS
CHIPS
DRINKS

VBS 2026
AT SYCAMORE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JULY 13-17
9:00 AM - NOON
AGES 4 THRU
ENTERING 5TH GRADE
REGISTER YOUR CHILD TODAY!
Text VBS2026 to the church # 815-895-9113
RAINFOREST FALLS
Exploring the Nature of God

Summer CHANCEL CHOIR
All are welcome!
SUNDAY AUGUST 2ND
ONE MORNING. ONE PRACTICE. ONE SONG.
Come raise your voice and be part of something beautiful!
8:30 AM
MEET IN THE MUSIC ROOM for practice
9:30 AM
THEN SING A SONG AT THE SERVICE
ONE MORNING. ONE PRACTICE. ONE SONG.
All are welcome!



DO YOU LOVE COOKING OR CONNECTING THROUGH FOOD?

Our weekly meal ministry is returning soon. Volunteers are needed to help prep, serve and clean up. Whether you can help once or regularly, your gifts can nourish and care for our church and community in meaningful ways. Text MEALS or see Cassie Grashorn.

FELLOWSHIP TIME ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

Coffee is provided each Sunday morning during Fellowship Time, and we're looking for volunteers to bring treats! Whether you'd like to celebrate a special occasion, enjoy time to mingle after worship, or simply share something happening in the life of your group or ministry, providing treats is a great way to connect with others. Sign-up at the Welcome Center or call the church office.





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Sycamore United
Methodist Church



@sycamoreumc



JULY 2026

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays at 9:30am

Children's Sunday School at 9:30am

Sunday Evening Service at 4:30pm

www.facebook.com/SUMCIllinois/ or

www.youtube.com/results?searchquery=sycamore+umc

JULY 5 - SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SERVICES OF HOLY COMMUNION

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Romans 7:15-25a

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

JULY 12 - SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Guest Preacher – Rev. Christian Coon-

Northern Illinois Conference- Director of Congregational Development

Genesis 25:19-34

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

JULY 19 - EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Genesis 28:10-19a

Romans 8:12-25

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

JULY 26 - NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Genesis 29:15-28:

Romans 8:26-39:

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Please keep your pastors & 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.

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Those for whom we pray:

Nancy	Otto
Diana Grace	Regan & James
Jimmy Schmidt	Kathy M.
Bob Clarner	Aimee Alanis
Norma Clarner	Ellis McLives
Jerrica Newby	Rosalie Gartner
Mike Milyanovich	Robert Wolfe
Kelly Brens	Gene Miller
Damian Olson	Rick Bianco
Vicki	Ray Larson



The Service Personnel and Their Families

SGT Matthew Einhorn
PFC Timothy Einhorn
*CPO Frank Incapreo
SFC Christopher Isabel
MSG Matt "Scott" Stewart
PO3 Samuel V. Bell
SSGT Brock Grimaldi
*SPC Alexis Jones

*Maj Steve Haack
*CPL Joshua Caraballo
SPC Sutit Jackson
PV2 Liam Keller
E-3 Amanda Royer
*PV2 John Archer

**indicates deployed personnel*

Please pray for the LIFE Missions youth and adults as the travel to and serve in Louisville, KY June 28-July 3: Scott Durand, Tim Durand, Abby Handschuh, Kennison Sims, Elora Slater, Brandon Williams, Grady Fowler, Jerry Armstrong, Julia Buie, and Todd Puttkammer.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

INDEPENDENCE AND GENEROSITY

This month the United States is celebrating 250 years since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Special events are happening not only on July 4th, but throughout the year. They focus on political freedom from Great Britain, but settlements for religious freedom were also a key reason people came to the Colonies. We are blessed to live in a country which gives us the ability to choose our form of worship without fear of persecution. But this freedom does not take away our commitment as Sycamore United Methodists to serve and care for our congregation, our community, and those in other lands in need of assistance. The words of the Apostle Paul say, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another." (Galatians 5:13). As we celebrate Independence Day, let us also remember we are called to give freely and serve generously.



Gifts in support of the missions and ministries of Sycamore United Methodist Church may be made in multiple ways. In addition to contributions given in the offering plate Sunday, checks may be mailed to the church at 160 Johnson Avenue, Sycamore, Illinois 60178; securely given online at www.sycamoreumc.org/giving; or by sending the text "giving" to the church phone number – 815-895-9113.

REMEMBER SUMC IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST

A legacy gift is your opportunity to support the church's work beyond your lifetime, to change lives and honor the role the church played in your life, your family's life, our community, and our world. Legacy gifts allow flexibility to respond to the greatest needs of tomorrow. Legacy gifts can benefit the giver through tax savings. Retirement assets are particularly good assets to achieve the best tax outcome for a planned gift. Consult with your accountant, financial planner, or attorney before finalizing any charitable gift.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER, GROW, AND SERVE



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

There's still time to have kids join the fun! VBS is July 13th-17th from 9-noon daily. This is an exciting opportunity for children ages 4 years old through 5th grade to explore the nature of God at **Rainforest Falls**. Register your child by texting **VBS2026**. Volunteers are also needed! Sign up to help by texting VBSHELP.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

We were able to hire an additional childcare/nursery provider for the summer months, but we are still seeking someone to serve in this role beginning in the fall. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Todd Puttkammer.

We are also looking for Sunday School teachers. If you feel called to serve and can help, even occasionally, please reach out to Todd Puttkammer. If everyone takes a turn, we can easily fill the schedule and ensure that our children are cared for and supported each week.

We are well into our summer programming with Christian Kids and Magic Mondays. There are still spaces available in both programs, and families are welcome to join at any time throughout the summer. If you are interested in registering or would like more information, please contact Todd Puttkammer or scan the QR Code.



ADULT STUDIES

Summer Book Study; Wednesdays 11am

Our second Summer Book Study starts July 22nd @11am as we examine **The Heart of the Psalms**. This study will help you weigh why and how these psalms matter and how they can be transformative today for us, the church, and God's world. Register by texting **SUMMERSTUDY** to the church phone number. Copies are available in the Resource Center or through Amazon.

YOUNG ADULT

- **Young Adults Fellowship** meets every Thursday evening from 6-7:30. Anyone age 18-29 are invited for dinner and discussion about how God is showing up in our lives. A virtual meeting is available.

YOUTH MINISTRY

- **Youth Group** will be every other week. The next youth group is July 5th and 19th, 6-8 p.m. We have food, games, and devotion. All are welcome.

WORSHIP, MUSIC AND ARTS

Summer Chancel Choir – Sunday, August 2! Join us for a special Summer Chancel Choir on **Sunday, August 2**. Meet in the **Music Room at 8:30 a.m.** for a brief rehearsal, then sing one song during the **9:30 a.m. worship service**. **No experience is needed**—just a willingness to sing and make a joyful noise! Everyone is welcome, and we'd love to have you join us.

LIFE MISSIONS

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Andale Taco Night a success! Andale Tacos has been such a wonderful partner to our community and congregation, and we are grateful for their support.



We will be embarking on our Mission Trip to Louisville, Kentucky, on June 28 and returning on July 3. Please keep our team in your prayers as we travel and serve. We are excited for the opportunity to support the community and participate in discipleship ministries wherever needed.

If you would like to support our mission team, please contact Todd Puttkammer or make a donation through the church's online giving portal.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER, GROW, AND SERVE

PRIDE MINISTRY UPDATES

PRIDE (Promoting Reconciliation Inclusion Diversity and Equality) continues its programming with our monthly Game Nights: July 25th and August 15th from 4-7pm in the gym. We had an amazing time at Dekalb Pride Fest on 6/20 for the 4th year! We very much enjoyed seeing everyone and sharing in community joy. We were so happy to partner with Faith Now and host the ecumenical community Pride Worship on 6/28. We were so happy to bring so many community faith leaders together. We love bringing people together for conversations, meals, games, and fellowship. All ages & abilities welcome at all events! Reminder: You are a beloved child of God and we hope to see you soon!



HOPE HAVEN FOR JULY

Prepare or buy just one course or the entire meal to feed 60-65 people! **Please call the church (815-895-9113) to let us know if you will be delivering it. Sign-up at the Welcome Center in the Concourse or by calling the church office at 815-895-9113.** You may also get on the Hope Haven volunteer list by texting HOPEHAVEN to the church # of 815-895-9113.

DIRECTOR NEEDED – SYCAMORE FOOD PANTRY

The Sycamore Food Pantry is in need of a new Director. This important ministry provides food and hope to many in our community, and we are prayerfully seeking someone with a heart for service to help lead it. If you feel called to learn more, please reach out to the church office.



FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR JULY

Soup	Canned veggies	Spaghetti sauce	Salad Dressing	Bar Soap
Crackers	Crunchy Peanut butter	Mayo	Paper towels	
Canned Chili	Canned Peas, Beans	Canned meals	Toilet Paper	
Canned Refried Beans	and Corn	(i.e spaghetti, beefaroni)	Tissues	
Canned fruit	Canned Tuna		Toiletries	

DUFFLE BAG COLLECTION

Many children in the foster care system leave their home with their possessions in trash bags. UWF will continue through July to collect new or gently used (clean, working zip-pers, no wheels) duffle bags to be distributed to foster care participants. There is a collection box in the church concourse.



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH ANNUAL THRIFT SALE

As you prepare for summer garage sales and decluttering, please remember to set aside items for our upcoming Thrift Sale on August 14th & 15th. We gladly accept gently used clothing, housewares, toys, and décor. Please do not donate TVs, Christmas trees, office electronics, furniture, dinnerware sets, textbooks, or other large/heavy items, as we are unable to accept them.

Donations will be accepted:

- Monday, Aug. 10th from 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM,
- Tuesday August 11th from 9:00-3:00
- Wednesday, Aug. 12th from 9:00 – 12:00 at the south door.

Please, no early drop-offs. We'll also need helping hands for set-up and sale days, so please consider keeping some time available to volunteer!

JULY 2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

The deadline for the August issue of The Messenger is July 20th

Summer
OFFICE HOURS

Summer Office Hours
Monday - Thursday: 8:30am-2:00pm
Fridays: 8:30am-12 Noon

			1 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 11:00 AM Summer Book Study 6:30 PM All-Recovery Mtg	2 4:00 PM TOPS 5:00 PM Congregational Care & Outreach 6:00 PM Young Adult Fellowship Group	3 Church offices closed	4 Have a safe 4th of July!
5 9:30 AM Sunday Worship Service 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School 4:30 PM BREAKTHROUGH Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 PM Middle & High School Youth Group	6 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 12:00 PM Food Pantry 12:00 PM Summer Magic Mondays. 7:00 PM Trustees	7 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM Disciple Fast Track "The Prophets"	8 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 11:00 AM Summer Book Study 3:00 PM Summer Christian Kids 6:30 PM All-Recovery Mtg.	9 4:00 PM TOPS 5:00 PM Congregational Care and Outreach 6:00 PM Young Adult Fellowship Group	10	11 12-6:00 PM VBS Set-up
12 9:30 AM Sunday Worship Service 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School 11:00 AM VBS Set-up 4:30 PM BREAKTHROUGH Sunday Evening Worship	13 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Vacation Bible School 12:00 PM Food Pantry 5:30 PM Finance Comm. 7:00 PM Church Council	14 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Vacation Bible School 6:30 PM Food Pantry Board	15 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Vacation Bible School 10:00 AM Caring Ministry Team Meeting 6:30 PM All-Recovery Mtg.	16 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Vacation Bible School 4:00 PM TOPS 6:00 PM Young Adult Fellowship Group	17 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Vacation Bible School	18 8:00 AM UMM Breakfast 6:00 PM VBS Pool Party
19 9:30 AM Sunday Worship Service 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School 11:00 AM NOW Circle 12:00 PM VBS Tear-down 4:30 PM BREAKTHROUGH Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 PM Middle & High School Youth Group	20 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 9:30 Ruth Circle 12:00 PM Food Pantry 12:00 PM Summer Magic Mondays	21 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Grace Circle	22 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 11:00 AM Summer Book Study 6:30 PM All-Recovery Mtg.	23 4:00 PM TOPS 5:00 PM PRIDE Comm. 6:00 PM Young Adult Fellowship Group	24	25 4:00 PM PRIDE Game Night
26 LIFE Missions Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday Worship Service 9:30 AM Children's Sunday School 11:00 AM Pumpkin Fes Float Fundraiser Picnic 4:30 PM BREAKTHROUGH Sunday Evening Worship	27 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 12:00 PM Food Pantry	28 1:00 PM UWF Missions Team	29 9:00 AM Faithful Fitness 11:00 AM Summer Book Study 3:00 PM Summer Christian Kids 6:30 PM All-Recovery Mtg.	30 4:00 PM TOPS 6:00 PM Young Adult Fellowship Group 6:00 PM GS Troop 697	31	August 1 8:00 AM UMM Breakfast

3 SIMPLE RULES

1. Do no harm 2. Do good 3. Stay in love with God.



2026 NIC LAY MEMBERS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORTS

The Annual Conference was a moving experience. What impressed me from the start was the power of the UMC as demonstrated by attendance of hundreds of Methodists, and the strength of their convictions. The entire conference was filled with people who are thoroughly committed to the cause.

The Bishop ran the conference in a very professional and efficient manner. All were encouraged to voice their opinions without fear of retribution, and even those with opposite ideas were able to express their views and still remain friends. Some issues had, of course, highly emotional content, these could have led to shouting matches, and the NIC had none of that. This environment added greatly to the fundamental commitment to fairness that is part of the foundation of the church, and one of the reasons UMC members are proud to support this organization and dedicate themselves to its work. And, the Bishop is really funny.

If I could summarize the NIC in one word, that word would be Hope. In the first session, several young people were interviewed about a variety of subjects, these were very impressive people and it was nice to hear their viewpoints. One of the questions was, "How do you define Hope?" and one of the respondents said, "Hope is Eternal." That answer struck a chord in me.

At the Plenary, there was a presentation on the ICE attacks in Minnesota, by a speaker who had been there during the siege. The fear she had, the brutality of the attacks, the visions of innocent people being beaten in the streets ... intense and terrifying. ICE Whistles were distributed to everyone who was there.

This session impacted me deeply because I am working on math with 11-year-old twins whose parents are political refugees from the Congo and, if they were to become ICE victims ... I do not want to even think about that. Here we are, in the United States of America, in 2026, and we are living under the same black cloud as Anne Frank in the 1940's. The nazi sirens replaced by black SUV's.

I very much appreciate having had the chance to attend the 2026 NIC.

Submitted by Bob Brown

Annual Conference every year is a wonderful experience. We had an Affirmation of Faith for Immigrant Rights. More important now, more important than ever. We lifted up 70 years of Ordination of Women, 40 years as a Reconciling Ministries Conference and 30 years of the of Ordination of Deacons.

I enjoy seeing the Order of Processions of the Local Pastors, Deacons, Elders, and Clergy Members coming in with their robes on. I have learned many things about how a church is run.

Submitted by Becky Brown

This year was personal, as I was able to meet deacons of our conference and hear the amazing work they are doing in their communities. They are serving in churches, schools, non-profits, and within institutions that help to practice hope, as Bishop's message encouraged us to do. Bishop Schwerin's powerful message called us to seek *refugia* (Latin plural for *refuge*) while being external support and spaces to cultivate internal strength in ourselves and for others. This is a time to use our gifts, not hoard them, for the flourishing of our neighbors. Christian faith is personal and relational, and this year has filled me with hope for what God is stirring inside me and our congregation to aid in the healing of the world.

Submitted by Becca Rome

I had the pleasure of attending the 187th Northern Illinois Annual Conference. Under the inspiring theme "Practicing Hope" we worshiped, learned, and legislated for our connectional church.

Bishop Dan Schwerin delivered a powerful address on how offering refuge is a core practice of hope.

Milestone celebrations at the conference honored 70 years of full clergy rights for women, 50 years of volunteers in mission and 30 years of the Order of Deacons

Submitted by Jessica Gale

This year's Annual Conference had a theme of Practicing Hope. The scripture that especially applied was Romans 5:3-5 about suffering producing perseverance, and perseverance producing character, and character producing Hope. We should not be disappointed in hope as hope never fails. The Bishop preached on Hope in our present day, though he started with the disciples as fisherman introduced to Jesus. This was when Jesus told the disciples to cast their nets to the other side of the boat and the fish collected were abundant. The disciples saw Jesus as "present" but his love message was not yet "evident"; the presence of God was working in not yet visible ways (as is hope).

The Bishop spoke about immigrant present day injustice with most of us citizens silent which produces an emptiness, then numbness from our inaction. He also said there still is silence from most about the racism of Christian nationalism. We should dive into non-violence, speaking out and standing up until it takes you to Jesus. Hope never fails if we commit to these next steps. Hope bears the cross in the present, and hope does not depend on outcomes. God's love (grace) is greater than the disappointment of outcomes not realized.

The Bishop referred to a passage from Psalms 41:1-4 about standing with the helpless. The Bishop identified a term "Refugia"—a practice of hope and shelter for what is next, and the non-violent good for all to survive. He wants us to stand with the vulnerable and refuse toxic leaders. We must overcome our fear standing with the vulnerable and protesting as some Methodist did during the ICE operation at the Broadview detention center. He said during times of emergency, success must be mutual as we all should flourish "Hope does not disappoint as the love of God has been poured out of our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (Romans 5:5)

Submitted by Joel Maurer

When husband Joel told me that the theme for this year's conference was "Practicing Hope", I thought, "Boy! Do I need that!

Romans 5:3-4 was lifted up as a key scripture: "We rejoice even in our struggles, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope."

So what did I hear that gave me hope?

- God is working in the midst of our hopelessness even though not yet visible.
- Fall in love with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit's overflowing presence will see you through.
- We Christians must not be silent when we see the dehumanization of God's children. The Holy Spirit will empower us for the work ahead.
- Hope is not based in a specific outcome (i.e. we can have hope when things are not going our way).
- God is calling us to practice hope; to look for where we can live out hope.
- New life can come from crisis and disturbance (much like resurrection out of death).
- The church may lose members, but as a practice of hope and united by urgency, the church can rebuild in a new way.
- The exile described in the Old Testament was long and painful but not the end of the story. God was ultimately faithful.
- Lamenting loss is an act of hope that assumes God cares for us and hears us.
- God gives us the grace to walk through the river of grief and ultimately transforms us.
- Hope refuses to stand still.

My desire is that these paraphrased messages I heard at conference will increase your hope as we continue together in Christ's ministry.

Submitted by Helen Maurer