



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



Contact Us:

Office Hours:

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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 building will be closed December 24-December 31. Worship service will be livestream only on Sunday, December 26 (no Sunday School) Please drop off year end contributions by 12:00p December 23, or mail to the church by December 31.



Christmas Eve candlelight worship service is Friday, December 24, at 7:00p .

Church Staff

Pastor: Tom Goodell: vandaliaumcpastor@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant: Casey Kistler: vandaliafumc@outlook.com
Secretary: Sue Miller (Tues. & Fri.)
Director of Music: Louise Weiss: gctheorygal@hotmail.com
Director of Young Children's Ministries: Amanda Milam
Preschool Director: Cindy Laramée
Custodians: Mike & Sharon Hagy
Assistant Custodian: Andy Sidwell



Nursing Home Residents & Shut-ins:
 Brookstone (1607 W. Fillmore)
 Diane Adams (Apt. 15); Carlos Biellier (Apt. 2);
 Margaret Carroll (Apt. 10);
 Arlene Hoffman (Apt. 4); Iris Rademacher
 (Apt. 36), Mary Ann Rhoades (Apt. 41),
 Frank Roeder (Apt. 25)

FCH/Long Term Care (650 West Taylor)
 Audrey Fink (Rm. 408)
 Marian Miller (Rm. 404)

Lutheran Care Center
 (702 W. Cumberland Rd., Altamont, IL 62411)
 Mary Crawford (Rm. 16)

Dolan Memory Care Homes
 (Dublin—11330 Dolan Way, St. Louis, MO
 63146)
 Phyllis Rames

Willowbrook
 (1124 Sunset Dr., Vandalia)
 Deb Endres
 Larry & Sandy Peyton
 Norman Rhoades

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

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Prayer Concerns

Patti Bohner (Diane Adams' daughter, mobility issues)
Roger Clark (surgery)
Mary Crawford (congestive heart failure; Lakeland Nursing Home; Effingham)
Gary Doolen (cancer)
Margie Dowell (Amanda Milam's grandmother; health concerns)
Mona Durbin (friend of Sue Miller and Jaime Warren; breast cancer; chemotherapy)
Shona Edwards (Bill Warner's niece; cancer)
Mason Feltner (Kelly Clark's nephew; chemotherapy for A.L.L. leukemia)

Bill LaDage (pulmonary issues)
Carson LaDage (Sharon and Bill's grandson; brain stem tumor remains stable, as he remains in a clinical trial at St. Jude)
Marian Miller (comfort care)
Heather Overlin (Larry Osborne's daughter; health concerns)
Norman Rhoades (acute bronchitis, leukocytosis; FCH)
Udo Sines (issues with transplant rejection)

"To some of the best kids I know! I'm not sure I can adequately describe how much it means that you camped out in FREEZING weather because you love Jenna and Holly so much and because you care so deeply for your peers who don't have enough to eat on the weekends. I love you all! Thank you so much!" —Debbie Hobbie (Nourishing Greatness)

"We had a very successful fish fry this year. Over 400 meals were served making this one of the most successful fish fries ever! Thank you for your generous donations!" —Jeff Endres

"To the parents of the 'Little Ones'—these children are such a blessing to us. We enjoy their enthusiasm, their comments, and just watching them participate. Thank you for bringing them to worship and introducing them to Jesus." —Joyce & Jim Staff



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I have been doing genealogical research on the Goodell family in America. We arrived "Goodale" in 1634 and settled in Salem, Massachusetts. Our ancestors were Puritans and among the first acts of the Puritans in Massachusetts was to ban any public celebration of Christmas. In 1659 the city of Boston levied a fine (five shillings) on anyone publicly celebrating the holiday. The logic of this was that the Bible does not tell us when (calendar wise) Jesus was born, we should be thanking God for his death not praising his birth, and – well Puritans were just not inclined to fun! It would be two decades before the ban was repealed.

There is much about the public transformation of the Holy Day into the holiday of Christmas that we should lament. Christmas has become too much about the money we spend, the food we ingest and the cultural appropriation of the day of Jesus' birth into something else.

And the Puritans were right. We don't know when, calendar wise, Jesus was born. Most scholars point to early Spring, the season when shepherds would have taken sheep into the fields to graze. December 25 was already a Roman holiday and it made sense to transform a pagan day into a Christian celebration. Jesus may have been born December 24, or he may have been born another day.

But I also believe the Puritans were wrong. We should celebrate the birth of Jesus and give thanks for his death and resurrection. That God would choose to bring salvation through a baby born in difficult circumstances to an ordinary couple speaks volumes about who God is. God is the God of all humankind, not just the rich and powerful. God is the God of all humankind, not just those born under Abraham's covenant. God is the God of all humankind.

God chose not to force the birth of His son on humankind, rather God gave (gives) it to us as a gift we may open. Shepherds, magi, and a variety of barnyard critters chose to open this gift and travel to the manger; but many in Bethlehem did not. Many people do not to this day.

We who have made the spiritual journey to Bethlehem and believe the Savior of the World was born there should celebrate this day. In fact, we should reclaim it. We should share "Merry Christmas" and not "Happy Holidays", emphasize the nativity and remind people that this is a Holy Day and not just a holiday. We should proclaim the themes of this day, giving thanks to God and marvel at God's presence in the form of a child.

Years ago there was a brouhaha about vandalism of a nativity set outside a church. The baby Jesus was stolen! The rest of the characters were left in place. The thieves certainly thought they could ruin Christmas by stealing the Christ child.

The church leaders took out an ad in a local paper begging the thieves to return the large, plastic image of a baby in a manger. Members of this church raised funds to replace the statue, but of course one could not be procured before Christmas day. There was even a debate in the church over whether to take the entire display down.

Finally, the pastor and church council resolved to leave the display up, sans the baby Jesus. The pastor announced on a Sunday morning, "vandals thought they could ruin Christmas by stealing the baby Jesus. But we know the truth. Those who hate or do not believe in the Christ child may seek to remove him; but we who do will proclaim instead the truth of his birth."

How will you proclaim and celebrate your belief in Christmas this year? Merry Christmas, Amen.
 Pastor Tom



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



50+ Year Members!

In September we had the privilege of honoring members of the United Methodist Church for 50 years or more.

Pictured in front row: Carolyn Daniels, Iris Rademacher, Jim Staff, Joyce Staff, Margaret Carroll, Carlos Biellier, Phyllis Thoman, Arlene Hoffman, Dorothy Schultz, and Joyce Mueller. Back row: Roger Corrington, BJ Mueller, John Burnam, Roger Clark, Candy Carroll, Donna Crotser, Mark Miller, Jan Johnston, Jack Johnston, Carla Knebel, Sara Clark, Sue Miller, Eric Miller, and Barb McCart.

We Need The Following:
Packaged Cookies



The N.O.W. Committee will be delivering Christmas cookie appreciation platters to Fayette County First Responders, teachers, and the Health Department. They plan to deliver 9 large platters. They need your help in providing cookies and treats for the platters. Please bring in your treats to the Church office or Wesley Hall kitchen Sunday, Dec. 5th, or Monday, Dec. 6th. Platters will be assembled and distributed on Tuesday, Dec. 7th.

"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



68 pledge cards have been received so far. \$329,260.00 has been pledged. Thank you for your commitment to the church!



THANK YOU
Thank you for giving to the Lord, I am a life that was changed, Thank you for giving to the Lord, I am so glad that you gave!

As I reflect back on this past Collection Week, I keep thinking of the chorus of an older song by Ray Boltz, **Thank you.** Thank you for blessing these children with your gifts. Now they have an opportunity to hear the Gospel, because you shared your gifts with them. Just as the children above already received their gifts, millions of others are waiting to be introduced to Jesus, His love, and His salvation. Pray that the children will receive the greatest gift- Jesus, as their Lord and Savior. Know that you have made a difference in reaching the children of the world and one day in eternity we may know each and everyone that we touched. To God Be the Glory!

Two scriptures come to mind when I think of the mission of OCC. Matthew 28:19 says: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Thank you for being obedient to the Lord and for sharing your blessings with others.

Matthew 24:14 says, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Jesus is patiently waiting for the whole world to know the Good News of His salvation and OCC plans to continue taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth!"

Thank you for being an integral part of this ministry in reaching others with the Good News of Jesus Christ! May you have a blessed Christmas with your families!



December is here and we are getting excited for this magical season! It is our privilege to share the Good News of Jesus' birth with our students...and to make sure they understand the real reason for the season! During the month we will study letters N, O, and P and study the themes of The Night Sky, Ornaments on Trees (Santa), Penguins, and the Story of Baby Jesus. We will also cover numbers 14, 15, and 16. Our Christmas program is December 20th at 6pm in the Church Sanctuary. Our party is December 21st, and holiday break is December 22-January 3.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from FUMP staff and students!
Miss Cindy, Miss Sue, Miss Sarah



Mark your calendars!! Our Kingdom Kids and Sunday School youth have been working on a Christmas program for the past several weeks. The program will be during morning worship on Sunday, December 12th. Following worship, there will be a small reception in Wesley Hall.

Sign up for poinsettias by December 15. 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 \$12.50



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** (\$12.50), or you may bring it to the church office.

Deadline: Wednesday, December 15.

Please print clearly. Thank you.

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

BY: _____



To God Be The Glory

**VANDALIA DROP OFF
New Record: 3,754 BOXES**

**Heart Of Illinois Team
New Record: 20,367 Boxes**

Vandalia Drop Off is part of the Heart of Illinois Team. This team is made up of drop offs from Arcola, Arthur, Effingham, Fillmore, Greenville, Marshall, Mattoon, Newton, Robinson, and Vandalia.

It has been estimated that each box potentially reaches up to 10 people in the family or community. Just think, our team totals have the potential of reaching 203,670 people with the Gospel. God does immeasurably more than we can even fathom! To God Be The Glory!

584 TOTAL BOXES FILLED BY FUMC

Packed By Members - 41

Sponsored by Members - 99

EXTRA Boxes Filled - 444

444 EXTRA shoeboxes were filled with homemade items from the Prayer Shawl Ministry, donated items from members, and from monetary donations designated for supplies.

TOTALS FROM VANDALIA DROP OFF (2009 - 2021)

FUMC Vandalia - 5,958 Boxes

OCC Vandalia Drop Off - 29,994 Boxes

A "thank you" booklet was included in the bulletin on 11-28-21. If you were not in attendance and would like to have a booklet, notify Jill Zimmer.

The ministry of OCC would not be possible without members of churches, individuals, and businesses packing boxes or making things to send to the children. **The Prayer Shawl team and individuals within our own congregation went above and beyond in so many ways throughout the year.** Collection Week would not happen without the many volunteers both adults and students. The **students from our youth group were AWESOME!** Check out their pictures on the church Facebook page and also in the "thank you" booklet. Also, a special thank you to Alan Lurkins, Max Durbin, Clayton Gathe, and JD Vieregge for making sure the boxes were safely delivered to Effingham. This is a **HUGE UNDERTAKING** each year, but it takes all of us to build His kingdom.