

The Parish Visitor

February 2026



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A People of Five Books

We United Methodists are a people of five books: *The Bible*; *The United Methodist Hymnal*; *The United Methodist Book of Worship*; *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*; and *The United Methodist Book of Resolutions*. The first one is obvious. Also, there is no one translation that is recommended; we have lots of choices. For most of my career, I have relied on the New International Version, first published in 1978 which corresponded with my studies at North Central Bible College. In 2011, the NIV underwent a major revision.

Eugene Peterson's *The Message* is a popular paraphrase of the Bible, and it can help us to look at familiar passages in new ways. However, if you're looking for a modern, more accurate translation, *Today's Living Translation* is an excellent option.

In 2022, the New Revised Standard Version was updated and released, and it is considered the version that is the most faithful to the original text. I recently purchased a copy and have been using the NRSVUE in my devotions. ("UE" stands for "Updated Edition.")

The Book of Discipline is our official law, doctrine, and polity guide. It contains our constitution, beliefs, and rules for clergy and laity. It also contains our Social Principles, and a brief history of Methodism, including the various branches which comprise our Connection. *The Book of Discipline* details how our church is to be structured, from our General Conference to the local church. It is also subject to revision every four years by action of our General Conference. A copy of *The Book of Discipline* is in the church office.

The Book of Resolutions is also subject to revision every four years. It is a collection of the church's official social policies and stances on hundreds of current social, moral, economic, and environmental issues. It serves as a guide for ministry, education, and action for members and leaders, distinct from the legal *Book of Discipline*. These resolutions offer guidance—but not binding law—on topics like care for the creation, immigration, health, and justice. A copy of *The Book of Resolutions* is in the church library.

The United Methodist Hymnal is our guide for worship, and like our other books, it must be approved by General Conference, which can be a daunting task. Our current hymnal was presented to the 1988 General Conference for approval, and I suspect those who had worked on it for years were fearful that it would be subjected to dozens if not hundreds of amendments. (Let you mind run wild on that thought!) As it happens, one of the keynote speakers at that General Conference was Bishop Woodie White who, at the time, was assigned as our bishop. He preached a sermon there based on the hymn, "Lord of the Dance." After he preached, there was only one amendment to the hymnal, and that was to include "Lord of the Dance;" it hadn't been included in the initial presentation.

Thanks to our Bishop, "Lord of the Dance" was

Continued on page 2

SPECIAL DATES:

- February 1 Communion Sunday
- February 1 Forge 6pm
- February 5 Caring Hearts 9am
- February 6 Food Pantry 8am
- February 8 Galentine 1pm
- February 8 Super Bowl Sunday
- February 11 Loving Hands 1pm
- February 12 Brookstone 10:15
- February 15 Missions Meeting 5:45PM
- February 15 Trustees Meeting 6PM
- February 15 Finance Meeting 6:45PM
- February 15 Administrative Council 7:30PM
- February 16 Presidents Day Office Closed
- February 16 Men Meeting 6PM
- February 18 Ash Wednesday 6pm
- February 19 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- February 19 UMW Ex Meeting 4pm
- February 20 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- February 22 Forge 6pm
- February 23 Relay for Life Meeting 6pm
- February 24 Loving Hands Food Prep 1pm

Continued from page 1 added to our hymnal and we sang it this past January 18.

When I decided to transfer my ministry into the UMC, one of the first things I did was check out our hymnal. And I liked what I saw. I liked the layout of the hymnal and the diversity of hymns. But our hymnal is more than hymns, which I learned on my first Sunday under appointment. That was in Verona, and since it was the first Sunday of July, I served communion. As it happened, my District Superintendent Robert Mushrush also attended that service, and afterwards, he complemented me on the service and my sermon. But then he told me that when it came to Holy Communion, I needed to follow our hymnal.

Oops.

I had been in the habit of simply reading a scripture before serving communion; however, I learned that morning that United Methodists celebrate the Lord's table in the context of prayer. That's why it's called "The Great Thanksgiving."

Years later, I attended a funeral for a friend, and a colleague conducted the funeral. Let's just say that he didn't follow the pattern for a funeral as found in our hymnal and the words of Rev. Mushrush echoed in my mind. All that to say that our hymnal gives us our pattern for worship.

The Book of Worship is our companion to our hymnal, providing us with prayers, liturgies, and patterns for worship for the entire year. I have a copy and have used it regularly over my 32 years as a United Methodist pastor.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18, and once again we will begin our Lenten journey "by the book." Specifically, we will rely on the Bible, the hymnal, and our Book of Worship. Service time is 6 pm, and I trust you will be able to join us as once again we continue in our journey of faith "by the book." Or, more accurately, by the five books.

Connecting People to Christ with you,
Pastor Dave

Connecting with the Word

As believers in Christ, we are shaped by the Word of God. Following are the scriptures suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary for each week in February. I encourage you to read these passages to prepare your hearts for worship, whether in-person, on the radio, on Facebook, or on our church YouTube page, [@aledounitedmethodistchurch](https://www.youtube.com/@aledounitedmethodistchurch).

Sunday, February 1: Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; and Matthew 5:1-12.

Sunday, February 8: Isaiah 58:1-9; Psalm 112: 1-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; :3 and Matthew 5:13-20.

Sunday, February 15: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-9. You'll note that today is Transfiguration Sunday, which is reflected in today's readings.

Ash Wednesday, February 18: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51: 1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 and Matthew 6:1-21.

Sunday, February 22: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Roman 5:12-19; and Matthew 4:1-11.

Connecting People to Christ with you,
Pastor Dave

Sponsors for our February Radio Broadcasts

February 1– Jerry & Joan Luxmore

February 8– Janet Hunter

February 15– Rae & Darla Dixon in honor of their 40th Anniversary

February 22–Janet Hunter



Join Our “Bucket Brigade”

We had an excellent response to our Advent Buckets with proceeds going to Heifer International as we raised \$2,000 for this excellent ministry. With the arrival of Lent, you will have another chance to fill them with your spare change, only this time, proceeds will be directed to another vital missions endeavor: our United Methodist Connectional Ministries and Benevolence Fund.

As a United Methodist Church, Aledo contributes a set amount of money every year to our denomination at both the regional and the global level. The regional level is the Illinois Great Rivers Conference which encompasses roughly all of Illinois south of Interstate 80.

The funds we contribute are called *apportionments* and they fall into two categories. The first is *Clergy Support and Administration* which essentially pays for our denominational “overhead.” It’s not quite as glamorous as some of the more visible work The United Methodist Church is doing to combat hunger, share the good news of Jesus Christ, or raise up new leaders to develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing our world today. But, guided by God’s Spirit, it is the oil that lubricates these gears moving the church’s work forward to impact hearts and lives. Without it, the lifegiving work of The United Methodist Church simply wouldn’t be possible.

The second category is called *Benevolences and Connectional Ministries* and it includes missions and outreach ministries within our Conference and beyond. For 2026, the Conference budget for this category is \$2.891 million; Aledo’s portion of that total is \$10,572 or \$881 per month.

This year, we want to get a head start on this apportionment, so we’ve set a goal for our Lenten buckets: with your help, we’ve set a Silver Goal of \$881, or one month’s apportionments for Benevolences and Connectional Ministries. Our Gold Goal is \$1,762, or two month’s apportionments.

Benevolences and Connectional Ministries supports congregational development, Wesley Foundations on Illinois campuses, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Conference camping ministries, Africa University, and the Black College Fund, to list just a few ministries.

Buckets will be distributed beginning on Sunday, February 15. You may also pick up your Lenten bucket at our Ash Wednesday service, 6 pm on February 18.

Please return your buckets on Easter Sunday, April 5th.



Wanted: Your Help

Once again this February it will be our turn to help at the Churches of Mercer County Food Pantry. We need volunteers to work Tuesday, February 3, from 5:30 to 7 pm and again on Friday, February 6 from 8 am to noon.

If you would like to help your neighbors, please contact Mary Flint.

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat."
Matthew 25:35

Our AUMC Volunteer of the Month for February: Candice Schultz

Do have someone in your life that makes you feel special and important? They put so much love, time, energy and effort into making sure you feel appreciated. We at The Aledo United Methodist Church get to experience that every time we walk into the building. Candice Schultz, our February Volunteer of the Month, creates a homey and beautiful environment for all of us. You can see all of her creative talents in our building. From the tasteful, seasonal or holiday centerpieces in the Fellowship Café and the dining room to the lovely displays on the altar each week, you can view Candice's gifts.



Candice isn't just limited to those places in our church either. During special events- Christmas, Easter, Galentine, and Vacation Bible School, you are able to see the beauty of Candice's creations throughout the entire building. She builds backdrops and provides decorations that make the space pleasing and engaging.

Another way we get to appreciate Candice's creativity outside of our church is through our annual floats in the Homecoming and Holly Days parades. Candice is able to use the theme, and then, design and create a masterpiece for our entries. Our floats are always one of the best ones!

Thank you, Candice! Your gifts and talents are such a blessing to our church. The many hours that you work tirelessly on each and every project to produce such stunning results is the reason why you are our Volunteer of the Month for February.

**Congratulations to Candice Schultz,
Our February Volunteer of the Month**

Who was St. Valentine?

Valentine was a Roman priest and physician who lived under Roman rule during the Third Century. At that time, Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage because he believed that single men made better soldiers. However, Valentine defied the emperor's ban on marriage by secretly joining couples in marriage. Consequently, Valentine was arrested, thrown into prison, and subsequently martyred.

While in prison, Valentine reportedly befriended the blind daughter of his jailer, Asterius, and healed her sight. Before his execution, he supposedly wrote her a letter which he signed, "From your Valentine." That legend begat our modern tradition of giving Valentine greetings.

Valentine was martyred for his faith on February 14, 270 AD; that date as established as his feast day by Pope Julius I a century later. Today, St. Valentine is the patron saint of love, young people, and beekeepers.



Forge is the youth ministry of AUMC for youths grade 6 through 12.

This month Forge will meet at 6 pm on Sundays, February 1 and 22.

GBHEM Scholarship Portal is now open

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) scholarship application portal is open for United Methodist students seeking scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study at colleges, universities, and seminaries.

In 2025, GBHEM awarded more than 2,500 scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students at over 600 schools worldwide. This financial aid helped students pursue their dreams to serve as the next generation of leaders. You may submit one application each year.

The deadline to complete your application is Friday, March 6, 2026. For more information about how to apply, log onto www.gbhem.org/scholarships or contact Pastor Dave.

To: Caring Hearts Food Ministry
Aledo United Methodist Church
Rev. David Schultz, pastor

Congratulations!

We are delighted to inform you that your food ministry has been selected to receive a grant through the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Food Ministry Grant program. Your commitment to serving families facing food insecurity in our community is truly inspiring, and we are honored to support your vital work during this time of growing need.

Grant Award Amount: \$1,000.

We pray that this grant funding will help strengthen your food ministry and make a meaningful difference for families in our community who are struggling with food insecurity.

Thank you for your faithful service and for answering the call to feed the hungry. We look forward to seeing the impact of your ministry in the months ahead.

Blessings,
Curt Franklin
Coordinator of Mission & Outreach
Illinois Great Rivers Conference

No Greater Love

Please keep **Tim Hay** in your prayers as he once again shares the love of Jesus with "No Greater Love" in New Orleans February 13-17.



Brookstone Service

Pastor Dave will conduct worship and serve communion at Brookstone on **Thursday, February 12** at 10:15am. Participants will meet on the second floor activity room.



We're On YouTube!

Technology has outpaced our website, and that means we can no longer stream our service live on our webpage. Thankfully, we have responded to that challenge by creating our own YouTube page. We won't be streaming live on YouTube just yet, but by early Sunday afternoon, our 8 am service will be archived on our YouTube page.

To access our services there, first log on to YouTube. Then type [@AledoUnitedMethodistChurch](https://www.youtube.com/@AledoUnitedMethodistChurch) in the search bar. You will recognize our "Jesus window" in the banner and the front of our church as the profile picture. Please remember to "Subscribe." You'll find that there are already several videos of our services posted on our homepage. Videos are listed by date and sermon title, if applicable. For example, our last service of 2025 is listed as "2025-12-28 A Sight for Waiting Eyes." Simply click on the video, sit back, and join in the worship experience.

Incidentally, if you post [@AledoUMC](https://www.youtube.com/@AledoUMC) in the search bar, you will visit the YouTube page of our sister church in Aledo, Texas.

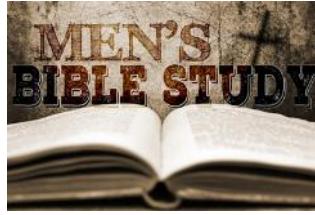
Finally, even though we are developing our own YouTube channel, we plan to continue streaming our 8 am services on Facebook.

Heifer Project Results



Bible Studies for Men

- **Men's Bible Study Wednesday**
- **Morning at 6:30AM** . Come for breakfast and a time of studying God's Word.
- The Men are currently studying *Ten Men of the Bible*



Sunday

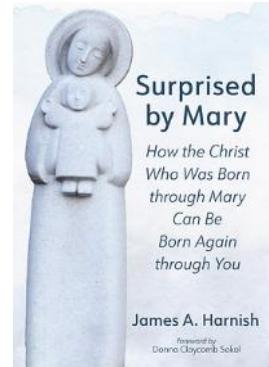
WORSHIP TIMES:

8AM Blended Worship
9AM Sunday School
9:45 Rock & Worship

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Our Tuesday morning Bible study has just launched into *Surprised by Mary*, a Bible study by United Methodist pastor James Harnish. Pastor Dave leads this 90-minute study every Tuesday morning beginning at 9am in the Seekers classroom

You are welcome to join us for coffee, fellowship, and the Word in this faith-forming weekly event.



Volunteer Opportunity to Help our Community

We have partnered with the Mercer County Health Department for many years to provide food for their Mental Health Program through our Loving Hands Ministry.



But maybe you didn't know that the Health Department distributes 1000 pounds of fresh produce from Riverbend Food Bank in Davenport to five sites in Mercer County each Wednesday. Volunteer drivers make the trip to Davenport in the Health Department's van and distribute the produce on a rotating basis each week. We use this same service to receive the reduced price items from Riverbend on Wednesday for the casseroles and food packs that Loving Hands provide the Health Department.

Mercer County Health Department is in need of an additional volunteer driver or two to join in the monthly rotation of driving to Davenport and back to distribute the fresh produce to our community. Please contact Ruth Dulaney for more details if you would like to volunteer.

The United Methodist Men meet on Monday, February 16th. There will be a meal, a short business meeting, and lots of fellowship. Join us, and bring a friend!



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

02/03/2007– Jesse & Connie Midkiff

02/26/1977– Bill & Kathie Newswander



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

02/04–Joan Reynolds

02/20–Sue Galambos

02/20– Sheila Spencer

02/29– JeAnne Balmer



The deadline for the next Parish Visitor is
Wednesday, February 18th at 8am.

**All articles must be
submitted by this date!**

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

General Needs

Jodie Andress
JeAnne & Tom Balmer
Christy Bender/pain
Renae Brown mental health/loss
John Easley
Marie Fredrickson/
InterVarsity
Gabrielle/FMD
Gene & Tracy Keppy
Dennis Litwiler/lymphoma
Cayden Logsdon/seizures
My daughter & her family
My granddaughter
Paul & family/addiction
Sharon Peterson/pain
Cyd Stockham and Warren
Maynard/pregnancy
Ellie Valen & family/LCH



Those Living With Cancer

Nick Billiet, Tabby Essig, Renee Forber, Macoy & Lane Green, Aaron Heartt, Juna, David Murphy, Kathy Newswander, Jennifer Olson, Tomoe Peterson, Janice Pollock, Debbie Swank, Shelly T, Nancy West

Those Who Are Healing and Recovering

Alicia, Anne, Grant Biddle, Clint Bigham, Jayne Fitzsimmons, Gary Heard, Dave Higus, Jim & Mary McClellan, Donna Murphy, Mike Newsom, Dennis Palmer, Dianna Spencer, Mark Stanley, Sarah Thomas, Landon Zenk

Ongoing Concerns

Acceptance, Respect, Dignity, Equality
AUMC family
Brookstone, nursing homes, Vashti residents
Loving All Neighbors
Peace
Those who are homeless
Young person who needs peace

Those In Leadership

Bishop David Bard, Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Pastor Dave Schultz, Our Local and Federal Government, World Leaders, AUMC Chair persons and Committees, Andrew Hofer

District Schools

*The Staff, Students,
Teachers and Administra-
tion of:*
Mercer Schools
Sherard Schools
United Schools

Those Living With Grief And Loss

The Families of:

The Families of:
Marilyn Boswell
Becky Davis
Madge Douglas
Shirley Guyton
Max Hanson
Noel Huff
Pstricia Mueller
Norma Norton
Chris Pearson
Don Swanson
Trudy Turner
Rev. Rhoda Warner
Dick & Liz Zimmerman

Those With Health Issues

Bill Breedon, Connie Dellitt, Jim Droste, Diane & Stan Hunt, Roger Jacobs, Kathy Jenkins, Junie, Jean Kiddo-Hunt, Vicki Lowe, Mitch Meminger, Phyllis Meyer, Adam Mitchell, Steve Nimrick, Ruby Nimrick, Mom, Cara Osborn, Marion Pinkham, Bill Pollock, Nancy Robinson, Ashley Schmidt, Elizabeth Schroeder, Deb VanderHeyden, Nena Visser,

Hy-Vee Baked Product Schedule

Our HyVee bread and many other goodies are delivered on Saturday morning. They are available for you to pick up in the Fellowship Café area when you come to Church Services on Sunday morning. The bread is in the lobby outside the church office on Monday morning 8-9AM for you to select bread products for your neighbors and yourself.

February Connection Coins: Hy-Vee Bread Ministry

The Connection Coins (the “thinly-veiled Pringles cans”!) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, those cans are set out. You are encouraged to drop your change in—although we WILL accept “folding money”! And that change goes toward helping fund a ministry within the church.

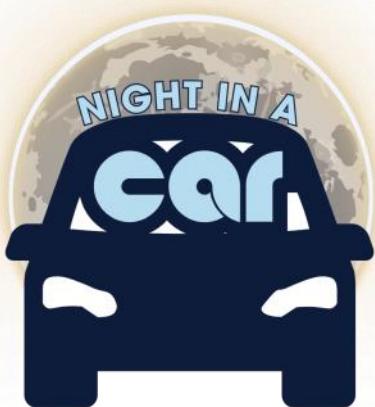
This month, on Sunday, February 8, the Connection Coin offering will go toward an awesome ministry. The HyVee Bread Ministry touches so many in our congregation and beyond. Bill, our bread delivery man, does this as a mission, asking for nothing in return. We help with the fuel expenses of this valuable ministry, giving him \$20 a week for gas. 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 11th of February will be used to help fund this valuable Ministry.

What a GREAT way to help connect people to Jesus Christ. So, remember to bring your change on Sunday, February 8.



“Night in a Car”

Friday, February 6th



Over the past year, Pastor Dave has worked with Kyle McEwen and Mercer County Better Together to address the needs of the less fortunate in our county. Their only fundraiser is “Night in a Car” which will be held Friday, February 6th at the VFW parking lot. Night in a Car is designed to call attention to the problem of homelessness. Pastor Dave is participating in the fundraiser and will be spending the night in his car. If you would like to sponsor Pastor Dave and support this fundraiser, you may sign up in the Fellowship Café or use the orange donation can in the café. Checks should be made payable to Mercer County Better Together.

In addition to Pastor Dave, Wayne and Vi Darsnek’s daughter Viminda and granddaughter Zoey will likewise be participating in this event and they are also looking for sponsors.



Many thanks for the gift of cookies, candy & fruit. Also thank you for all the cards, texts and phone calls during the holidays.

God Bless each of you and have a happy and healthy New Year.

In the Love of Jesus,
Darlene Jones

Thank you very much for donating to the Nursing Home project! The staff and residents of both of the nursing homes appreciate being remembered during this Christmas season. We loved that your donations helped spread Christmas cheer! We're sure they loved all of the gifts!

Thanks again,
Linus & Cathy Griswold

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for all of the cards, call and support when my brother Don Swanson passed. You are all much appreciated!

Much Love,
Martha Rittenhouse

I want to thank everyone who remembered me during the holidays. I enjoyed all the goodies and it was so nice to receive so many cards from those I haven't seen for awhile. May you have a Happy Healthy New Year!

God Bless all of you,
Ella Luallen

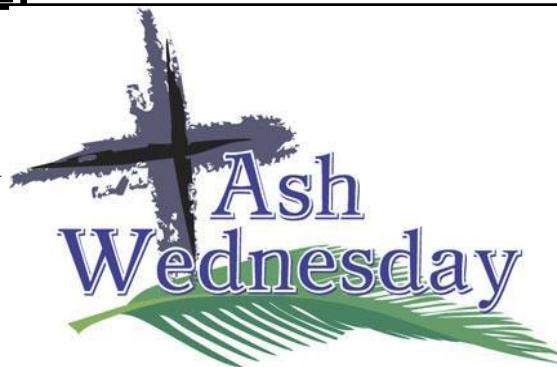
Did you know?

Aledo UMC maintains a Zoll AED defibrillator. It is located near the west exit of the fellowship café. Like a good insurance policy, we hope we will never have to use it, but in the event of someone having a cardiac arrest, it is available. Instructions for its use are posted beside it. Also, an instruction video has been uploaded to our YouTube channel. Please take a few moments to review it when you have the chance; it's less than four minutes long. Simply log onto YouTube and search for @AledoUnitedMethodistChurch and look for "ZOLL AED demonstration video."



Ash Wednesday Service

Aledo United Methodist Church will hold its Ash Wednesday service on February 18 at 6 pm. Please join us as we begin our Lenten journey together.





“Galentine” is for Chocolate Lovers”

(Just for the Gals of all ages to Celebrate Valentine’s Day)

Sunday, February 8, 2026

1:00 – 3:00 PM

AUMC Dining Room

Music by “Interlude from Motherhood”

(Katie Moran & Chealsea Allen – Harp & Violin Duet)

Note: Tip jar will be available for the musicians

**Purchase \$5 Tickets from Mary Flint,
Ruth Dulaney, or church office by Feb. 3rd**

Invite your female family and friends



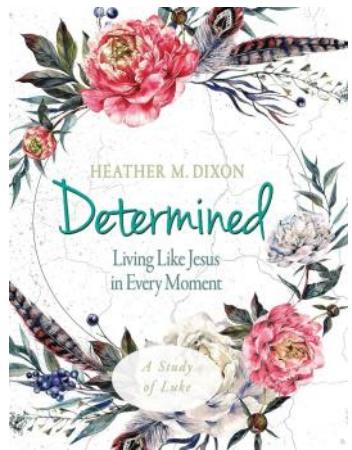
Do you need a ride to church?

Contact the church office at 309-582-2169 to schedule a ride. Or call Jon Swanson at 309-371-9501 to make arrangements to be picked up in our church bus.



Sunday Evening Women's Bible Study

Natalie Nelson leads a women's Bible study on most Sunday evenings at 6 pm. This November the ladies will begin a discussion of *Determined: Living Like Jesus at Every Moment* by Heather Dixon. Cost for the book is \$15. Be sure to let Natalie know you plan to attend or if you have questions!

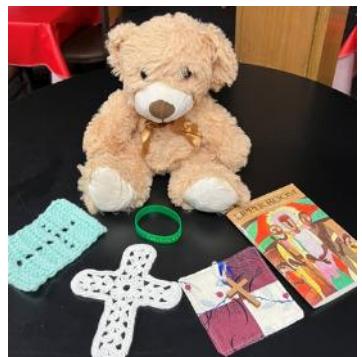


To Assist You in Your Prayer Life

If we, as a church, exist to connect people to Jesus Christ, then it is imperative that we are connected to Christ first. And we do that through prayer. To assist you in your prayer life, there are a variety of prayer needs available to you, including prayer bears, quilted squares with crosses, prayer squares made by Martha Rittenhouse, crosses made by Linda Schrock, and rubber F.R.O.G. bracelets. (F.R.O.G. stands for "Fully Rely On God"). These items may be found in the chapel adjacent to the fellowship Café'.

Additionally, AUMC purchases copies of the Upper Room bimonthly, in both large and regular print. The Upper Room contains devotions for every day, and devotions are written by believers from around the world—believers just like you who are experiencing the presence of God in their daily lives.

If you would like to make a donation for any of these items, please leave it in the fellowship café or place it in an offering plate.



FINANCIAL MATTERS

(WEEKLY NEED TO HOLD STEADY \$6,018.00)

Date	01/04/2026	01/11/2026	01/18/2026	01/25/2026
Attendance	134	138	102	105
Receipts				
(Toward Budget)	\$5,566.00	\$6,543.00	\$11,765.00	\$2,132.00

