

THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2026

ASBURY United Methodist Church

A FUTURE AND A HOPE:
TO LISTEN, GROW, AND LOVE WITH GOD

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.--Isaiah 9:6

Christmas is all about Jesus. Most of us agree with this statement, but how often do our preparations for Christmas actually reflect that priority? How easily do our schedules fill up with making it "the most wonderful time of the year" that we lose sight of the most wonderful gift ever given? *Our Christmas season schedules can overwhelm us, making our souls feel both stuffed and empty.*

What if you could spend this Christmas season delighting in your Savior instead of trying to create a picture-perfect holiday?[1]

We have a way to help keep our focus on Jesus this season: we will be unwrapping the names of Jesus, one name each day, during Advent. With each name found in the Bible, we will open our hearts to deeper understanding of who Jesus is, why Jesus came, what Jesus has done for us, and who we are in Him. This Advent, in *Unwrapping the Names of Jesus,* we invite you to prepare your heart to worship Jesus as never before. Come Christmas morning there will be no greater gift to open than the joy of receiving from the King himself a love that knows no bounds.

O, come let us adore Jesus!

In Christ,
Rachel
Pastor Rachel Z. Stone

If you have questions about baptism or about joining the church, email Pastor Rachel at pastor.rachel.asbury@gmail.com

[1] Ciuciu, Asherita. *Unwrapping the Names of Jesus*, An Advent Devotional.

Asbury Staff

Lead Pastor	Rachel Stone	Alabaster Coordinator	Kat Spohrer
Administrative Assistant	Julia Machin	Children's Ministries	Susan Lamy
Music Director	Kathy Love	Student Ministries	Leon Johnson
		Pianist & Organist	Teresa Kays

1500 S Campbell Avenue
Springfield, MO 65807

www.AsburyUnitedMethodist.org
Church Email: asburyumc@sbcglobal.net

Pastor's Email:
Pastor.Rachel.Asbury@Gmail.com

The office is open Monday — Thursday
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Asbury UMC 2026 Leadership Teams

Mission/Vision (Church Council)
Chair: Kimberlea Gray
Lay Leader: Becky Dobbs
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Bill Love
Class of 2026: Glenda Hefty
Class of 2027: Susan Cox, Becky Dobbs
Class of 2028: Carol Elmore, Chuck Gregg, Karen Nordstrom

Nominations/Lay Leadership Development Team
Chair: Pastor Rachel Stone
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Bill Love
Lay Leader: Becky Dobbs
Class of 2026: Lynn Clements, Ginny Oliver
Class of 2027: Karla Carroll, Ruth Spargo
Class of 2028: Jay Polchow, Jim Wilson

Those Serving This Month



A/V: Bill Love, Chuck Gregg, Karla Gregg

Greeters: Karen Nordstrom, Patti Blanton, Suzanne Boyts, Lisa Boyts, Dustin Gardner, John Fox, Judy Fox, George Sly, Georgianne Sly, Joyce Booth, Joan Wilson

Advent Readers: Kimberlea Gray, Jerry Gray, Jay Polchow, Wendi Polchow, Larry Presley, Lisa Boyts, Glenda Hefty, Nancy Lollar

Cards & Games Fun Day



Due to the Christmas holiday there will be no gathering for games on Wednesday, December 23rd. Our normal third Wednesday meetup will resume in January.

One Heart in Christ Circle

One Heart will be serving a meal to the unsheltered on December 4. Join us around 3pm in the church kitchen to stuff our burritos and prep the bags we'll hand out. We will head up to the Christian Church lot around 5:15 to be ready to serve there at 5:30 if the shelters are closed. If shelters are open, we will likely need additional help to deliver to the shelters and the time will be later. Thank you. For additional information, contact Sheryl Hill.

Mission/Vision Team (Your Church Board)

The Mission Vision Team is looking forward to the new opportunities in 2027 that God has in store for Asbury United Methodist Church! On Sunday, November 15, members of the 2027 Mission Vision Team met for a review of the Simplified Accountable Structure and a question-and-answer session presented by Amy Thompson. The Mission Vision Team would like to welcome our new 2027 members: Clark Mikkelson, Doug Clements, Ann Robertson, Jay Polchow, Sheryl Hill, and James Blanton. Please continue to pray for your Mission Vision Team as we make important decisions for God's church.

Mission Vision

Check It Out!



Along with my love of celebrating Christmas is my love of reading stories about Christmas! And in the church library is a book I really enjoyed: Christmas Stories from Around the World: Honoring Jesus in Many Lands. These 30 brief stories are very different than our usual maybe sweet, maybe humorous stories of pageants and portrayals of Jesus' birth. Except for one about the Bethlehem shepherds, all are true accounts of experiencing Christmas in very different settings, several during wartime. The times go as far back as 1917 and the places are as varied as the Middle East, India, Cameroon, Korea, Japan and the Philippines. Many tell of very poor surroundings with some facing worshiping illegally.

Hospitality

Asbury certainly had the opportunity to show our neighborliness on Election Day. Approximately 20 packages of cookies and at least 100 bottles of water were enjoyed by voters!

Now we turn our attention to the hospitality and outreach opportunities that especially come with the Advent/ Christmas Season. Greet warmly and genuinely all those who come—visitors and regulars—for traditional and special observances. Just three of the important dates are these: "Quiet Christmas" service, Dec. 8, 6:30; Christmas Musical service, Dec. 20, 9:15; Christmas Eve Candlelight service, Dec. 24, 8:00.

UWF

The Christmas UWF unit meeting will be the annual Christmas potluck brunch. We will gather 10:00-10:30; begin with a devotion at 10:30; music by Teresa Kays at 10:45; eat at 11:15. ALL are welcome!

Calendar

Dec. 5 Christmas Brunch

9 Mary Martha Circle, 1:00

9 One Heart Circle, 5:15

14 Naomi-Ruth Circle, 6:00 p.m.; potluck at Ruth Spargo's

PRAYER REQUESTS

Gene Day, Julia Phelps, Margaret Weaver, Jeanette Williams, Jesse Paxton & Ella, Sara Love, Ruth Spargo, John Bingham, Anastasia Phelps, Kathy Love, Kat Spohrer, Doug Clements, Larry Presley, Linda Thompson, Teresa Kays, Georgianne Sly, George Sly, Janet Bowman

Those we hold in loving care who are homebound or limited in their transportation:

Anne Marsh, Barbara Davidson, Jack Gladson, Kay Keltner, Sharon Coomer, Shawna Allen, Warren Meadows

Serving our country:

Cameron Cox, Shane Luke



Our Power of Love collection for December is for Rare Breed. A list of their needs is available on the collection box in the Fellowship Hall.

If you would like to make a financial donation, please make sure checks are written out with Power of Love in the memo line. Gifts can also be given online on our giving page under the Power of Love project.

MARK your CALENDAR

December 1
Midweek Advent Study

December 3
Mission Springfield

December 5
UWF Christmas Brunch

December 6
Christmas Musical Practice
Staff Christmas Party

December 8
Midweek Advent Study
Quiet Christmas Service

December 9
Mary Martha Circle
One Heart in Christ Circle

December 10
Lunch Bunch
Mission/Vision

December 13
Christmas Musical Practice
Christmas Caroling

December 14
Naomi Ruth Circle Christmas Potluck

December 15
Midweek Advent Study

December 16
Crosslines Serve Day

December 19
Harmony House Lunch

December 20
Christmas Musical Worship Service

December 22
Midweek Advent Study

MARK your CALENDAR

December 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 25
Merry Christmas!

December 27
Breakfast Church

December Birthdays



John Fuge

Leon Johnson

Lincoln Johnson

Donna Brown

Peggy Baier

Ella Hostetler



Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch will be meeting on Thursday, December 10th, at 11:30 AM. This month's selection is Colton's Steak House at 2020 E Independence St. Contact Carol Elmore for more information.

Unwrapping the Names of Jesus, Advent and Christmas Series

Advent Sundays Worship at 9:15am:

November 29th: HOPE. *Unwrapping the name…Messiah*
December 6th: PREPARATION. *Unwrapping the name…The Good Shepherd*
December 13th: JOY. *Unwrapping the name…The Great High Priest*
December 20th: LOVE. *Unwrapping the name…Emmanuel, God with Us**
**Special Musical presented by our Music Ministries during worship on December 20th.*

Special Worship services:

Tuesday, December 8, 6:30pm: Quiet Christmas. *Unwrapping the name…Prince of Peace*
Thursday, December 24, 8:00pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons and Carols Service
Unwrapping the name…Son of God
Sunday, December 27, 9:15am: Breakfast Church, carols and devotion in Fellowship Hall
Sunday, January 3rd, 9:15am: Epiphany Sunday, *Unwrapping the name…Bright Morning Star*

Advent Spiritual Formation opportunities:

Tuesdays, December 1, 8, 15, 22 at 10am, Devotional study led by Becky Dobbs
Advent Daily Readings booklet available for personal reading and prayer. 35 Names of Jesus.

Advent Connect and Outreach Opportunities

Sunday, December 13 2:15-6:30pm. Caroling with our homebound friends followed by light dinner

*Special Musical presented by our Music Ministries during worship on December 20th.

Financial News

As of 10/31/2026:

Contributions for October: $16,913
Contributions Budget: $15,333
Contributions YTD: $151,924
Budget YTD: $153,333

Other Income YTD: $49,010*
Other Income Budget YTD: $35,656
Expenses YTD: $195,794
Budget YTD: $227,493

Restricted Fund Use (CWS, Apportionments, etc.)

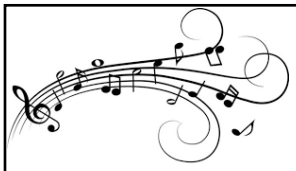
October: $525
Budget: $433
YTD: $2,859
Budget YTD: $4,333

Apportionments

Paid YTD: $2,525 **Annual Obligation:** $24,393 (10.4% paid)

*Includes load of $9,800 from Restricted Funds

As we approach the end of the year we are behind in our apportionment obligation to the Missouri Conference. Apportionments, like local church offerings, are the lifeblood of many life-changing ministries within our denomination and conference. Asbury's financial partnership in the shared ministry of The United Methodist Church and the Missouri Conference makes a real difference locally and in communities across Missouri and beyond. Asbury's apportionment gifts make numerous positive outcomes possible in our collective, connectional ministry as the Missouri Conference. Please mark your above and beyond giving towards this as "Apportionments."



Music Department News

Please join us for a special time as we share song and fellowship with our members who are homebound or in the hospital. Meet on Sunday, December 13th, at 2:15 at Asbury. Song sheets and jingle bells will be provided. All are welcome to help spread the holiday cheer, even if you don't feel like you can sing. We will meet back at the church after caroling for chili and soup. Contact Kathy Love if you have any questions.

Harmony House Lunch
Saturday, December 19

This month we will be providing our regularly scheduled meal for the residents at Harmony House. If you would like to donate food, please review the available slots at the link below and click on the button to sign up. If you need help with signing up, please call the church office and Julia will assist you. Refrigerated and non-refrigerated items can be dropped off at the church the week prior to December 19th, or you may also bring food that morning (please have the items to the church no later than 10:30 am).

Sign up at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050A4BABAF28A1FD0-67816656-harmony

To avoid identity theft and spamming, no personal contact information is published in this newsletter. If you would like to reach out to someone who is listed, please contact the office and we will help you.