

A photograph of a vigil at night. In the foreground, a person's hand holds a lit candle. To the right, another person holds a smartphone, its screen glowing. In the background, another person holds a lit candle. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light sources being the candles and the phone. A stone wall is visible in the background.

Chimes

The Newsletter of Gary Church
and Winfield Community Church
January 2021

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Sunday Worship

Livestream at 9 a.m.
at garychurch.org

Recording online later in the morning

Church Office Hours

Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
by appointment, 630–668–3100



Submissions for the February *Chimes* newsletter are due by January 15. Announcements for the Sunday bulletin and weekly enews are due each Tuesday at noon. Send all submissions to office@garychurch.org.

Gary and Winfield Churches use photos and videos of adults taken at events, classes, and worship for use in our printed and online publications and in social media unless an individual directs the church not to do so by completing a form available in the Church Office. We use photos or videos of minors only when their parents or guardians have given permission by signing the Gary Kids or Gary Youth registration forms, available on our website.

Shining the Light of Christ During Advent and on Christmas Eve



Teach Us to Number Our Days

by Rev. Dr. Chris Pierson

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12

The music app that I listen to, Spotify, invited me to see how I listened through the year 2020. Apparently, my favorite music is Christian music, my favorite artist is Gregory Porter (top 1%), my most binged podcast was Pastor Brian's (sorry, but I got behind schedule).

Spotify then thanked me for listening "all 670 months during 2020." Spotify was spot on with my music and podcasts, but they could use some help learning to number their days. But they are right; due to COVID-19, it really did feel like 2020 would never end. But how do we, as Christians, "number our days"?

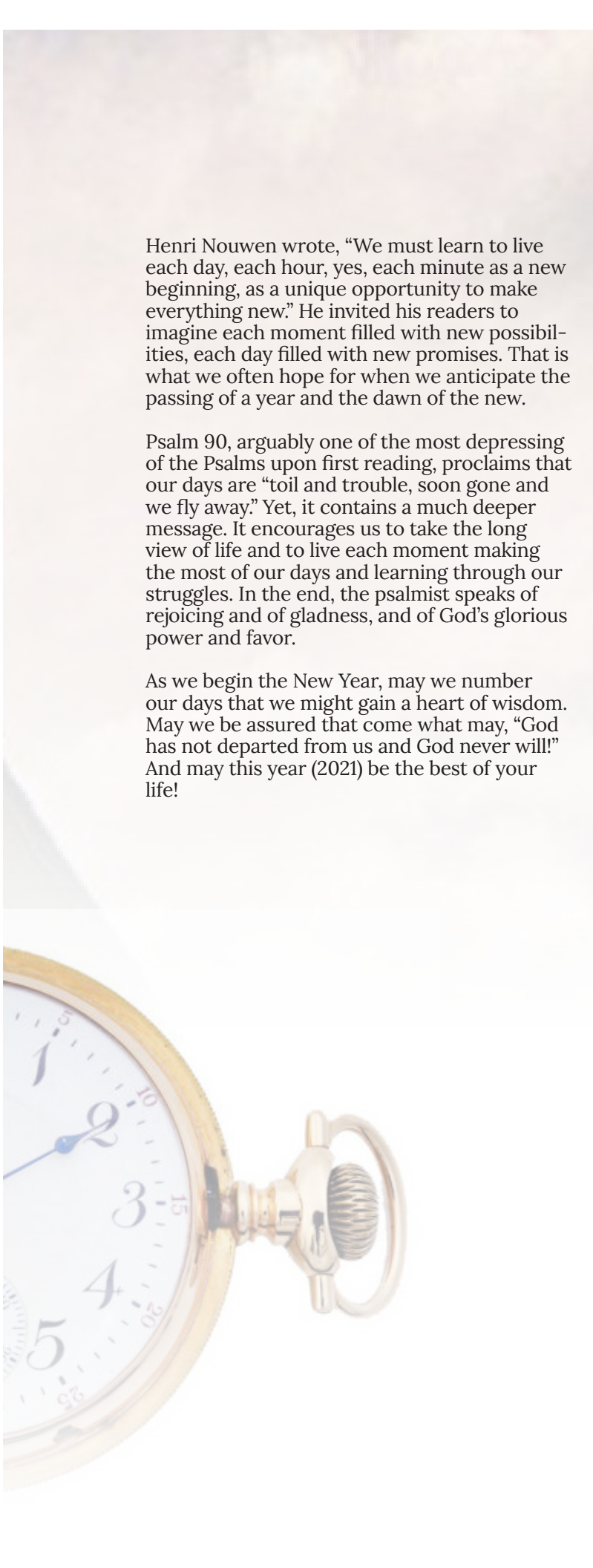
In many African American churches, like the African Methodist Episcopal Church I attended growing up, there is a tradition to mark the passing of one year to the next by attending "Watchnight Service." One could always be assured that, if not at your own congregation, there would always be one at a nearby church. In more recent years, they have become an alternative to the more raucous secular celebrations that have grown in popularity, or to watching the ball drop in Times Square.

Watchnight Services likely began with the Moravians nearly two centuries ago and were appropriated by John Wesley, though held more frequently and not relegated to New Year's Day. These developed and grew into Covenant Renewal Services and by 1775 Wesley was

writing of large services and the great blessing they were to many. Five years on, Wesley wrote that they had the largest congregation at the renewal of their covenant with God which ever met upon the occasion, and they were thoroughly convinced that God had not departed from them, and never will, unless we first depart from God.

In 1785 Wesley wrote, "Whether this be the last or no, may it be the best year of my life!" The service once again was a large one and Wesley lived on for several more years. Our Wesleyan roots run deep. Whether it is harvests, the lengthening of days, or the start of a new year, religious life has always looked for ways to connect with the rhythms and seasons of life to make them more meaningful, to infuse them with spiritual depth and breadth. We can look back with joy or sadness for what has been and look forward with anticipation for what shall come—the new. It can be an opportunity to renew our faith commitments to God and to decide again to make the most of time.





Henri Nouwen wrote, “We must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new.” He invited his readers to imagine each moment filled with new possibilities, each day filled with new promises. That is what we often hope for when we anticipate the passing of a year and the dawn of the new.

Psalm 90, arguably one of the most depressing of the Psalms upon first reading, proclaims that our days are “toil and trouble, soon gone and we fly away.” Yet, it contains a much deeper message. It encourages us to take the long view of life and to live each moment making the most of our days and learning through our struggles. In the end, the psalmist speaks of rejoicing and of gladness, and of God’s glorious power and favor.

As we begin the New Year, may we number our days that we might gain a heart of wisdom. May we be assured that come what may, “God has not departed from us and God never will!” And may this year (2021) be the best of your life!

Congregational Care

Congratulations

Grant & Olivia Davisson on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Elise, on December 11. Grandparents are Joe & Lois Davisson. Great-grandmother is Pat Davisson

Our Sympathy

Janet, Mark, Anna, and Jack Mathis on the death of Janet’s aunt, Susan Stangeland, on November 30

David, Cindy, and John Plate on the death of David’s uncle, Glen Plate, on December 9

Rob & Jennifer Whiting on the death of Rob’s uncle, Walter Figge

Mission statement

Grow in faith, knowledge and understanding of Christ as Lord and Savior

Serve our community and the world by sharing time, gifts, talents

Nurture one another through worship, fellowship, love

Demonstrate our discipleship to Christ

Proclaim God’s grace and good news

Adult Christian Education and Discipleship



Spiritual Practices for the New Year

Mondays, January 4 and 11, 7 p.m.

on Zoom, led by Kimberly Penrod Pelletier

Worry is so 2020. Engage some fresh, pandemic-proof spiritual practices in the New Year. Start 2021 off with solid teaching and guided experiences in meditation and Gospel contemplation—both to renew your mind and heal your soul. These classes are based in Scripture, grounded in Christian tradition, and backed by neuroscience. Register on the Adult Study Opportunities page at garychurch.org.

Kimberly Penrod Pelletier is a spiritual director, writer, speaker and podcaster. She is passionate about journeying alongside others as they discern the invitation and movements of the Holy Spirit in their lives. She is the creator of the course *Meditating with Christ*. You can connect with her and download a free, guided meditation at <https://kimberlypenrodpelletier.com>.

Worship Talk

Sundays, 11 a.m. on Zoom

facilitated by Rev. JoAnne Chase

We love the connection created by this group and welcome others to be part of the conversation. Grab your cup of coffee, click on the Worship Talk link on the website, and join the discussion of the morning service.



Zoom Meeting

ID: 878 0812 5188

Passcode: GaryUMC

To join by phone:

Dial +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 878 0812 5188

Passcode: 5084125

Men's Bible Study New Year's Series

Tuesdays starting January 5, 7 p.m.

on Zoom

Looking for a way to connect with other men while deepening your faith? Join the Men's Bible Study! The New Year's series will feature Matt Williams' *The Forgiveness of Jesus*. This video Bible study covers six events in Jesus' life that give a fuller understanding of the reason Christ gave his life on the cross and is taught by professors with specialized areas of knowledge. For information about participation and materials, contact Clay Watkins through the Church Office.

Zoom Meeting

ID: 964 0060 3753

Passcode: gcu\$0u

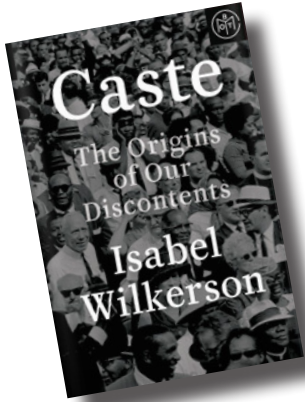
To join by phone:

Dial +1 312 626 6799

Enter Meeting ID: 964 0060 3753

Passcode: 654159





Anti-Racist Book Club | **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents**

Wednesday, January 27, 7 p.m. on Zoom

In this brilliant book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings. Beautifully written, original, and revealing, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* is an eye-opening story of people and history, and a reexamination of what lies under the surface of ordinary lives and of American life today.

To join the conversation, please purchase the book on your own and register on the Adult Study Opportunities page at garychurch.org.



United Methodist Women Mission u | **Faith and the Prison Pipeline: Understanding the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

Saturday, January 23, 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

The Northern Illinois Conference UMW is planning an enriching day of virtual learning and expanding horizons regarding racism. Registration details will be available at umcnic.org.

Daily Practices for a Healthy Marriage

Mondays, February 1 and 8, 7 p.m. on Zoom

If a 2020 video of your marriage's most memorable moments appeared on your social media feed, would you hit "like"?

God created marriage for your sanctification and enjoyment. Regardless of whether world events have brought you closer to your spouse or caused you to question your sanity staying in the marriage, you owe it to your kids and yourselves to invest in your marriage. Even a good marriage can be better. You just need the guidance to get there.

Gary Church has partnered with The Heritage Center for Marriage & Family to provide a two-session master class with practical tools to spark positive change in your COVID-weary marriage. Whether you regularly invest in your marriage or have successfully avoided self-help books, marriage seminars, or counseling, these sessions will move you closer to the marriage you want and need.

Dr. Chris Mazzaella and colleagues will coach you on how to grow stronger in the following areas:

1. Incorporate daily habits of attachment to bring about greater intimacy and reduce stress.
2. Experience hope in the face of perpetual problems and gridlock.
3. Leave hard conversations feeling understood and hopeful.
4. Identify when harmless distractions/escapes (digital media, binge watching, alcohol) erode your marital connection.
5. Create a values-driven marriage as a legacy for your children and grandchildren.

Register for this class on the Adult Study Opportunities page of garychurch.org. A donation of \$30 per couple is suggested.



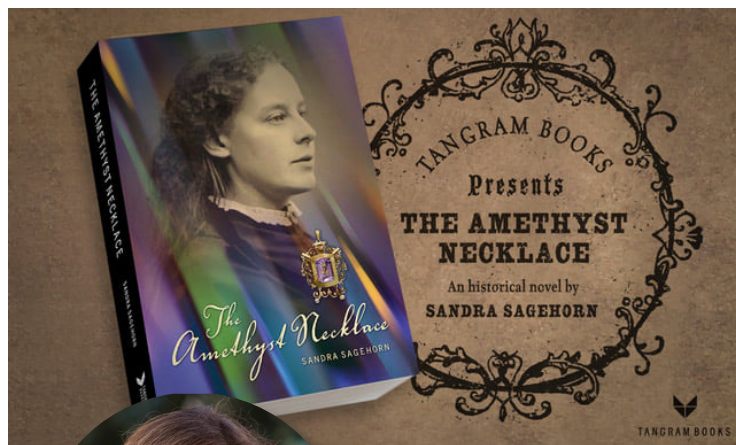
The Amethyst Necklace Book Talk with Author, Sandra Sagehorn

Monday, February 15, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Long-time Gary Church member and first-time author Sandra Sagehorn is excited to return to Gary to discuss her book, *The Amethyst Necklace*. Set in northern Illinois during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the story of *The Amethyst Necklace* follows young Mariah Allison as she navigates the uncertainties of the Civil War—and the crucial era that follows—toward a life of self-realization and independence.

Mariah's journey into adulthood touches on themes that are quintessentially American and especially relevant in the 21st century: the trauma of war, women's rights, education and moral character, social justice and the immigrant experience, faith, and family values. While this may be the saga of a particular woman and her family, it illustrates the light of faith shining through a single life continuing to illuminate for generations.

To participate in the Book Talk, purchase the *The Amethyst Necklace* through the Church Office for \$15 and register on the Adult Study Opportunities page at garychurch.org.



The New Year is a great time to jump into one of these ongoing groups.
You are always welcome!

Online Fellowship with Gary Walkers/Talkers

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. via Zoom

Zoom Meeting Tuesdays

ID: 830 6381 7458

Passcode: 7ZL1y6

To join by phone:

Dial +1 312 626 6799

ID: 830 6381 7458

Passcode: 445200

Zoom Meeting Thursdays

ID: 820 5421 1348

Passcode: 6nWP2p

To join by phone:

Dial +1 312 626 6799

ID: 820 5421 1348

Passcode: 940839

United Methodist Women Joy Circle

Third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. on Zoom
Contact Suzy Wible through the Church Office to be added to the group's email list.

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers and Beyond)

First and third Tuesdays of the month, 8 p.m. on Zoom and varying formats
See garychurch.org/mops for details and registration information.

Faith Club:

A Women's Interfaith Group

Second Tuesdays of the month, 7 p.m. on Zoom
On January 12, this group will also be discussing *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. It's a book worth exploring twice! To join the conversation, contact Kim Austin at kaustin@garychurch.org.



*If you can't access our website, you can also register for any of these classes by contacting the Church Office.

Learn How to Join a Zoom Meeting by Phone!

Even without a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, you can start connecting with Gary groups in the New Year using a traditional phone! Check out these instructions and learn how!

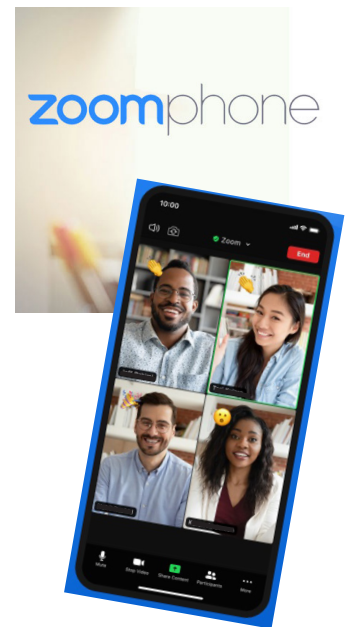
Joining a Zoom meeting using a traditional phone is useful when:

- you do not have a microphone or speaker on your computer
- you do not have a smartphone (iOS or Android)
- you cannot connect to a network for video and computer audio

Here's how to join a meeting with a traditional phone:

1. Dial in by location. In the Chicago area, that number is 312-626-6799. In the US you can dial 646-558-8656 or 877-369-0926 US toll-free.
2. You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID—the nine (9), ten (10), or eleven (11) digit ID provided to you by the host, followed by #. For example, the meeting ID for Worship Talk is 878 0812 5188, so you would dial that number followed by #.
3. You may be prompted to enter your unique participant ID. If you don't have a participant ID, just press #.
4. You will be prompted to enter a passcode provided to you by the host, followed by #. For example, the passcode for Worship Talk is 5084125, so you would dial that number followed by #.
5. If the meeting has not already started and “join before host” is not enabled, you will be prompted to press # to wait for the meeting to start.

Once you are in the meeting, make sure to let the host know who you are and that you've joined by traditional phone. We look forward to your participation in our Zoom classes!



Gary Makes a Difference by Educating Girls

The three-week adult education class, “The Power and Challenge of Educating Girls,” was well received by its participants. Tens of millions of girls globally cannot attend school and less than half of those that start primary do not enter secondary school. Yet, there is strong evidence that educated girls and women lift up whole communities, positively impact economies, and lead more fulfilling lives.

Reflecting on the incredible impact of a girl's education, the adult education class decided to find ways to support girls' education in third-world countries during 2021. We are exploring options to support girls of all ages—either by sponsoring education costs or helping to mitigate obstacles to their education.



In the new year, we will communicate ways in which our Gary community can join us as we support the need to educate girls.

~ Judy Selby & Cathy Mousseau, Class Leaders

A New Website for the New Year

When you go to garychurch.org, you will see our website has a whole new look. Now it is even easier to get information on current activities, register for classes, and learn about Gary's many ministries. Take a few minutes to explore what is there.

Can't find something? Contact Becky Lemna, our Electronic Communications Coordinator, at blemna@garychurch.org. Thanks to Becky for facilitating this exciting change.



Hey Parents! Happy New Year! If ever there was a need for a new year, this is it! To help you get a good start to 2021, we are offering a few classes designed for you. (Yep, you!) In January, spiritual director, author, speaker, and modern-day “guru” Kimberly Penrod Pelletier is going to show you some fresh, pandemic-proof spiritual practices to renew your mind and heal your soul. Then, save the date for February 1 and 8 for a two-session master class presented by The Heritage Center for Marriage & Family designed to move you closer to the marriage you want and need. See page 7 for more details and remember that taking care of yourself is a part of taking care of your kids. **Blessings and be well.**

what we're teaching

With the holiday season having just passed by, most kids still have the concept of giving and receiving gifts fresh on their minds. While many, if not all, of the gifts that were unboxed at Christmas will eventually fall into disrepair, gifts given by God will never fade! Through this “Unboxed” series, kids will discover what kinds of gifts those are, starting with the fact that everyone has special gifts! Then they will see how God can use those gifts, and special blessing from God, to help others. Our gifts help us care about what God cares about by focusing on heavenly things, and we can trust God with our gifts when we offer them up cheerfully!



what's happening

Gary Kids @ Home Lessons

Weekly, sent by email on Friday or Saturday

Check out these weekly emails with a family-friendly Bible lesson, activity, preschool video, and Grow T.V. video with the hilarious antics of Carll and Cassie!

Take-Home Craft Kits

Unbox your surprise gift this month! Delivered to your house and created for children ages 3–6, these craft kits provide hands-on fun and help faith grow at home!

Gary Kids Zoom Party

*NEW TIME! Sundays, January 10 and 24
10 a.m. on Zoom*

All children ages preschool 3's–grade 5 are invited to join Pastor Carey on the second and fourth Sunday of the month for our Gary Kids Zoom Party. We'll play games, learn about the Bible, and grow in faith together!

Zoom Meeting ID: 895 9462 0620

Passcode: Gary Kids

Helping Hands Mission Hospital Valentines

Join us for Helping Hands in January! We will help brighten Valentine's Day for children in the hospital by sending specially designed cards online. Gary Kids will be able to personalize the cards and add a note of encouragement to patients. They can also pray over the cards for the recipients before clicking “send.” Valentines will be printed at the hospital and delivered right to children who are inpatient. Watch your e-mail and the Gary Kids Facebook Group for updates with links to send these Valentines!





4th & 5th Grade Fellowship Sledding

Saturday, January 23, 2 p.m.

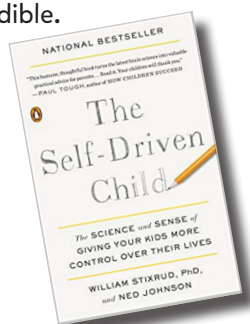
4th & 5th Graders are invited to Blackwell Forest Preserve for some serious sledding down Mt. Hoy! Participants will need to be dropped off and picked up. (Parents are welcome to sled too!) RSVP to Carey Bebar at cbebar@garychurch.org.



resource of the month

The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives by William Stixrud, PhD and Ned Johnson

Do you ever feel like you're working really hard trying to make the right decisions for your kids? Well, maybe it's time we left some of that decision-making to our kids! That's why we love the book (or audiobook) *The Self-Driven Child*. This book is incredible.



A Recommendation from our Gary Kids Librarian, Sarah Kovac

Each month we are sharing a book to help you connect with your children. In *The Wolf in the Snow* by Matthew Cordell, a girl gets lost in a snowstorm, and a wolf pup is separated from his pack. Sarah says, "I chose it because I think we have all been feeling separated from our packs. This heart-warming adventure shows how kindness has the power to connect us." Because it is a mostly wordless picture book, it is good for all ages.



Cuddle under a blanket on a snowy day, and let your kids tell you this tale of finding friendship in unlikely places.

The joy of Christmas with the 4th & 5th Grade Zoom gingerbread party!



January Youth Activities



Middle School:

Wednesdays, 7–8:30 p.m.

January 6:

Re:Form: How do I stop doing things I know I shouldn't do?
on Zoom

January 13:

Sledding, Northside Park

January 20:

Real World Among Us Night
at Gary Church

January 27:

Re:Form: Why does God let bad things happen?
on Zoom

High School:

Sundays, 6–7:30 p.m.

January 3:

Re:Form: How do I stop doing things I know I shouldn't do?
on Zoom

January 10:

Sledding, Northside Park

January 17:

Re:Form: Is it sin to think about sex?
on Zoom

January 24:

Real World Among Us Night
at Gary Church

January 31:

Re:Form: Why does God let bad things happen?
on Zoom

Why did Jesus go to hell?

by Daniel Lee

One of the questions Gary Youth asked was, “Why did Jesus go to hell?” Have you ever wondered about that line in the Apostle’s Creed, “He descended into hell”? Some churches have changed it to “He descended to the dead,” and others have taken the line out altogether. What was Jesus doing there? Why did Jesus have to go to hell of all places?

Did you know that the Hebrew Scriptures do not have a developed doctrine of the afterlife, much less one for heaven and hell? Instead, it was believed that all persons go to Sheol (Hades in Greek), which is the place of the dead. This particular line in the Creed is based on a passage from 1 Peter, in which it is written that Jesus descended to the place of the dead and preached the good news to the people gathered there. Yes, Jesus went to hell to preach the good news. Sounds like something Jesus would do, doesn’t it?

Theologically, the importance is twofold. The first is that God in Jesus really experienced the totality of human death—not just the crucifixion, but also the descent to Sheol. Second, even a place that seems most removed from God is, in fact, not beyond the good news of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, hell is experienced on earth, and Jesus shows up there too. Romans 8:38–39 says, “I’m convinced that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.” When we experience hell on earth, the good news is that Jesus is there. The added good news is that when others experience hell on earth, God has empowered us to go there and declare God’s presence. Who knew that Jesus going to hell is such good news?

*Please note that in-person events may need to be changed to meet COVID-19 restrictions.

Singing and Praying with You

by Jennifer Whiting

Methodists have always been a singing people. Charles Wesley himself was one of the most prolific hymn writers in church history, with 8,989 hymns to his credit!

Singing praise to God through great hymns has always brought unity, strength, and comfort to our church. But for ten months, we have been denied the act of communal singing, and this has hit us hard.

We also draw unity, strength, and comfort from our liturgy and prayers. To me, the most precious moments of our livestreamed worship are when we speak the Lord's Prayer together.

When I close my eyes and repeat the words of Christ, I imagine all the Gary people who are saying these cherished phrases at the same time. I picture you in your living rooms, eyes closed, coffee in hand, talking to God with me.

Somehow, this makes me feel closer to our church family. Samuel Stone's hymn calls it "mystic sweet communion."

I get the same sense of communion during Kevin Lange's Hymns at Twilight. During that hour, I feel close to everyone who is watching and humming along. Though we are not sitting side by side, we are connected across the fiberoptic miles by hymns that declare our faith and strengthen our hearts.

I hope you will join Kevin for the next **Hymns at Twilight at garychurch.org on Tuesday, January 26 at 7 p.m.** Kevin has selected the theme "Bright Hope for Tomorrow." I imagine you know the source of that shining thought (Thomas Chisholm's beloved hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness").

We invite you to share your favorite hymns that bring you hope! Please send suggestions to the Church Office at office@garychurch.org.

Wesley wrote, "O, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise." By myself I am one, but together we are hundreds singing God's praise, even from our own living rooms.



Musical Opportunities at Gary Church

Inviting Your Instrumental Gifts (All ages)

While singing is prohibited by the Northern Illinois Conference, we continue to use our musical gifts to praise the Lord and lead our congregation in worship. If you play a stringed or percussion instrument, we invite you to prepare a piece to share, either by recording at home or playing in a live-streamed service. Please contact Jennifer Whiting for more information (jwhiting@garychurch.org).

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Altar Bells and Sanctuary Ringers (HS–Adult) prepare small-ensemble music for ringers using distanced music stands and no sharing of bells. Musicians practice at home, and then meet for a short rehearsal on Sunday at church prior to the worship service. (Strict guidelines for sanitation, face masks, time limits, and distancing are in place for in-person meetings.) Please contact Sharon Schmidt through the Church Office if you are interested.

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The Brahms Institute for Singers Opens a New Season

Thursdays beginning January 21, 7 p.m. on Zoom, HS–Adult

All music lovers are welcome to join. Our focus for the spring term is self-care for musicians—breathing, posture, keeping the voice moving, and finding strength and peace through great music. Please register on the Adult Study Opportunities page at garychurch.org to reserve your spot and to receive the Zoom link each week.



Meredith Taylor Mollica leading exercises for breath and mindfulness at The Brahms Institute for Singers

The Sounds of the Carillon

by Vickie Austin

A few weeks ago, I found myself alone in the office, working on a tight deadline. I was feeling panicky. The board retreat packet still needed a lot of work. My shoulders hurt from hunching over my computer and I began to second-guess myself. Maybe I bit off more than I could chew, changing careers in a pandemic.

In September I took on a new full-time job as president of the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce. Due to the pandemic, our office is closed. From time to time, though, I work in the chamber office on Wesley Street, just east of the DuPage Historical Museum. The building has large windows that overlook Adams Park.

The door was propped open that night to let in the fresh air. As I looked at the clock, anxious about my looming deadline, I suddenly heard a familiar sound: the carillon from Gary Church began to play, just across the park. Slowly I got up from my computer and walked over to the door.



The hymns of the carillon washed over me. I felt as if the church came to me that night. I was wrapped in the love of our congregation, conjured out of the notes and the air. The music brought visions of being inside the sanctuary—I was transported. I envisioned the heads in each pew, nodding along with the sermon, heard an “Amen” from Pastor Brian and the cries of a baby, felt the warmth of light coming through stained glass. I experienced both shock—our carillon!—and peace. I finished my work through tears and went home.

As we gathered outside together on Christmas Eve, we created a new tradition, singing along with the carillon. That’s what this pandemic has required of us: new traditions, new ways of being. None of it is easy. But sometimes, when you least expect it, there’s a song in the air. Listen. Breathe. And, as I did that night in my office, give thanks.

“Since the early 1960s Gary Church and community have enjoyed the daily pleasant sounds of bell tower music from our electronic carillon system. Unfortunately, that beautiful sound went silent in 2018 when the carillon system failed and could not be repaired. Trustees began researching replacement alternatives and in late 2019 approved a project to install a new Schulmerich Electronic Carillon.

“The system included new speakers on the top of the bell tower and a new electronic control system. We also ran a communication cable to the new carillon so that Kevin Lange could make changes to the system over the internet. The new carillon became operational in February of 2020 and we are back to playing beautiful music at 9 a.m., 12 noon, and 6 p.m. each day.”

~ **Gerry Schmidt**,
Trustees Summary Report for
2020 Church Conference:

“Gary Church’s original carillon, a Schulmerich Magnebell II, was installed in 1963. The system ran on eight-track tapes and the speakers were in poor condition. In December of 2019, the Trustees voted to purchase a new Schulmerich Series One Carillon. The goal was to get the carillon installed before Easter of 2020.

“Given the sudden and unforeseen consequences of this pandemic, the timing of this project was perfect. In February of 2020, the new carillon was installed, programmed, and began playing music. The system is fully connected to the internet and allows Kevin Lange, our carillon champion, to program the music as he sees fit.

“The play times were expanded to 9 a.m., 12 noon, and 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. We adjusted the Sunday schedule and made some adjustments for volume and content. Thank you to those who have shared your very positive responses to this outreach ministry of music. We look forward to continuing this well into the future.”

~ **Eric Ostensen**,
GUMC Co-Chair, Trustees
Committee:



Christmas Sharing

Christmas Sharing served many in our community once again, even with all the adjustments necessary during this unprecedented year. Despite the inclement weather on December 12, Gary's dedicated volunteers came out and worked hard. It was great to be together again! St. John Lutheran Church was a wonderful host. Their extensive parking lots allowed for no backup of traffic onto the streets. Tents, particularly those over the food distribution area, made a huge difference on a wet, cold day.

Our Gary congregation has a long tradition of supporting Christmas Sharing, but your help this year was simply amazing! The total raised by all eight churches and the Facebook site was over \$65,000! Guests received \$100 gift cards, with families of six or more receiving \$150 gift cards. The Northern Illinois Food Bank was very cooperative and helpful in educating us to the process of distribution in this new format. They had great personnel on site to assist. Our guests received shelf staples, dairy, produce, and a protein box. We want to thank Northern Illinois Food Bank's Director of Corporate and Foundation Giving, Jeannine Kannegiesser, who helped facilitate our partnership this year with NIFB.

In this, the 51st year of Christmas Sharing, we are grateful for Gary Church's continued support for our neighbors in need. Thank you for demonstrating such love and care for God's people during an immensely challenging time.

~ Joe Davisson and Shelley Kenyon



photo from 2019

MISSION *this month*

Continuing Your Care and Support

2020 is now behind us, finally, and we can prayerfully look forward to a better 2021. But we are not out of the woods yet; it will be months before the pandemic comes to an end and the country can begin an economic revival. Until we return to some kind of normalcy, those we know and the multitude of those we don't know will continue to suffer hardship. Missions cannot forecast what our friends and neighbors will need until the groups we serve know what they will be able to do for their clients. In the meantime, we can only ask that you continue to do what you have been doing to support our brothers and sisters needing food and shelter: donate or volunteer. You can learn more about the organizations we support by visiting the missions page of garychurch.org. Also, if you know of an individual or family currently isolated, reach out to them and lessen their loneliness with a call or a card. Here's hoping and praying for a better future. Stay safe and healthy; continue to live with caution until the pandemic is in the past.

~ **Joe Ruth**, Mission Committee Chair

Joy Circle Mums for Missions

Update

Our Mums for Missions fundraiser last fall was a huge success. In our third year of selling mum planters from Prosek's Greenhouse, we set a new sales record of 200 mums with 25 of these planters designated as gifts. The net proceeds of the sale have been distributed to these Gary UMC outreach missions which focus on women, children, and families: Christmas Sharing, Fundaniños, NIC Justice For Our Neighbors, Red Bird Mission School, and Gary Preschool. In addition, funds have been allocated to Kids Above All (ChildServ).

We wish to thank Deb Evans, Deb Hafner, and Kim Austin for assisting in every way possible throughout the sale. We especially wish to thank all who purchased a planter for your home or as a gift. The planters were large and the blooms were spectacular. In addition, the planters designated as gifts were beautifully decorated with a sleeve and a thick string tie. Joy Circle is looking forward to holding this fundraiser this coming fall, so we will see you then!

~ **Barb Wernicke**
for Joy Circle



2021 Lenten E-Devotional

Continuing this Gary Tradition

In the early days of the pandemic last year, when in the midst of the Lenten season we had to move quickly to online worship, our Lenten E-Devotional was one of the things that kept us connected when we could not be together—so much so that we extended it for over a month. We enter 2021 with much hope, though still uncertain what Lenten observances will look like this year. One certainty is that we can continue, together with God, to support and encourage one another with our written reflections and art in our annual devotional.

As we anticipate Lent, which begins this year on *February 17*, we invite all children, youth, and adults of Gary and Winfield Churches to register to share reflections, personal stories, and glimpses of God at work in our lives. In keeping with our “Together With God” theme, you might reflect on 1 Corinthians 3: 9 and how we are coworkers with one another as we allow ourselves to be used by God. Other themes you might consider include forgiveness, compassion, prayer, presence, dedication, or repentance.

Your submission should begin with a scripture passage and include the following:

Title: a title summarizing the theme of the message

Scripture: the scripture passage

Message: a 3–5 paragraph written message

Or

An original piece of art (photograph, painting, drawing, poem) that reflects the scripture passage

Prayer: a prayer focus for the day

Action: an action step based on the message

Contributor: your name

To register, please complete the form on the home page of garychurch.org or contact the Church Office by *Friday, January 22*. Submit your devotional to Kim Austin at kaustin@garychurch.org by *Sunday, January 31*.

We look forward to sharing your reflections daily through email as we help one another refocus our hearts and be intentional in our Lenten journey.

Viewing Sunday Worship Services

Our weekly service, which will continue to be livestreamed Sunday at 9 a.m., is also available for viewing all week on our website. If you tune in after 9 a.m. but while the service is in progress (until approximately 9:45) you will only be able to view in real time. However, beginning around 10 a.m., you can watch the recording of the full service. Later in the day, an edited version of the service becomes available on our website and on Vimeo.

Vimeo is an option for those watching the services on a smart TV. It is not necessary to have a Vimeo account to watch. Simply open the Vimeo app on your TV and search [garychurch](http://garychurch.org) (no space). Then scroll through previous services to find the current one.



Recording of Worship Services Available

If you have not been able to be part of our livestreamed worship services because you don't have a computer, we would be happy to send you an audio recording on a CD. Additionally, we have CD players available if you need one. Please contact the Church Office and we will add you to the list to receive the CD by mail each week.

Something You Should Know—Hope-y New Year

by Pastor Bruce Anderson

As you read this, a new year is under way, and probably many New Year's resolutions have been made. Starting a new year always gives us space for reflection on the year past and the things we've learned and want to change. A new year always gives us reason for hope.

As I write this, the new year is still a couple of weeks away, but I look to it with hope on a lot of fronts. First there is the coronavirus vaccine that is now available. Most of us are looking forward to being able to gather together again with friends, family, and our congregation. Virtual worship is getting us through the pandemic, but it is just not the same as being able to gather together to sing, praise, and fellowship. Perhaps we will never take for granted the ability to gather together after all this.

As we approach the new year, I am also making the journey with my father toward the end of his life. He most likely will be gone by the time you read this. He had a good life, being able to live independently until the last year of his 94-year span and I will be able to celebrate his life more than I mourn his loss. His death will bring a lot of changes. It will be strange not having my father around for support or advice. But I am glad that he will finally be reunited with my mother and his mother and brothers, as I look forward to one day being reunited with them in the life to come.

So I enter this new year with a fresh hope in the power of the resurrection and the way that makes every day a blessing.

Then there is the recent engagement of my daughter, with all the opportunity and hope that pending union will offer the family. We are hoping that Katherine and Alex will enjoy a long and happy marriage.

Many of us are also looking forward to a year where we will continue to confront and address blatant racism and hatred that became so fully evident in 2020. Hopefully we can make some real progress on racial justice and inclusion. We can hope that long-standing issues will finally begin to be addressed.

It is also a year that could bring change to Winfield Community UMC. This year we only have ten pledges for less than half our annual budget, so we will have to take a long, hard look at where we are going. Once we are able to gather again, we will be meeting to chart our course into the future. We've been discussing several options. We can stay the course and continue as we have been. We could remain independent and move the congregation to a new location, or we could combine forces with one of the other United Methodist churches in the area. Another possibility that has been brought up is becoming part of a proposed multi-ethnic congregation on the north side of Naperville. So there is much to consider that offers hope for the congregation in the coming year.

What are your hopes and dreams for the coming year? Let us dream together of God and the coming kingdom. There are so many possibilities, and with God truly anything is possible. Here is to new hopes and possibilities in 2021!





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CHURCH

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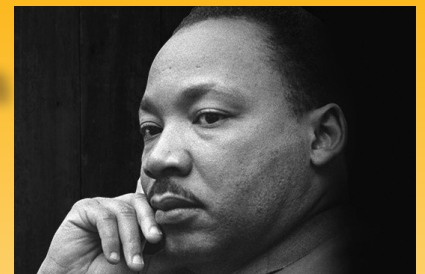
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Annual DuPage County Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Monday, January 18*



All residents of DuPage and neighboring counties are invited to join their neighbors in "Living the Dream," the Annual Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and legacy, in a documentary at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, January 18. This recorded service can be viewed on the Gary Church website, garychurch.org, and Gary's Facebook page as well as on the Second Baptist Church website, sbcwheaton.org, YouTube channel, and Facebook page.

This year we celebrate 31 years, the oldest public celebration of the life and ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in DuPage County, with singing by the Second Baptist Church Music Ministry, performances by George Saltar, "Motivator G," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Mountain Top speech by 14-year-old Charles Sykes, excerpts from various keynote speakers, and more.

The DuPage County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee is also a scholarship organization. Since 2006, \$55,000 has been awarded in scholarships to DuPage County graduating seniors who exemplify the qualities, beliefs, and works of Dr. Martin Luther King. For more information, contact the MLK committee at 630-260-0190 or visit their website at dupagemlk.org.

Please join us as we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.