

Chimes

The Newsletter of Gary United Methodist Church
January 2023



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Chimes VOLUME LXXI, ISSUE I

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Sunday Worship

9 a.m. Sunday Worship

In person

Livestream and recording
later in the day at garychurch.org
Child care available

11 a.m. Sunday Worship

Service of Word & Sacrament

In person

Church Office Hours

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



Gary Church Podcast

(sermon, scripture)

garychurch.org

Updated weekly



Pastor Brian Podcast

(prayers, Christian

conversations)

garychurch.org

Updated monthly

Submissions for the February *Chimes* newsletter are due by noon on Monday, Jan. 2. Announcements for the Sunday bulletin and weekly e-news are due each Tuesday at noon. Send all submissions to office@garychurch.org.

Gary Church uses 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.

So, What's New?

As we look forward to a new year at Gary Church, my mind turned to the beautiful words God gave to the prophet Isaiah:

*I am about to do a new thing; now it
springs forth; do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.*

Isaiah 43:19

These are words of hope and promise given by God to a people who have experienced great national trauma and dislocation (exile). God promises to do a new thing, but asks "Do you not perceive it?"

Sometimes it can be challenging to believe in a future, to trust in promises, and to envision opportunities that God is opening for us.

**I believe
that we are
better
together.**

So, God begins by speaking to the fears of the people. "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine." They are reminded that they belong to God, and God will be with them. And, God promises they will not be overwhelmed by the waters, for God will make a path, a way for them, and though they may experience the trials of fire they will not be consumed.

The new can bring with it a sense of dread and fear or a sense of hope and trust. Recall how when the people of Israel were journeying to the land of promise flowing with milk and honey, they wanted to go back to the fleshpots of Egypt, even though it had been a place of slavery and forced labor. Thus, God calls the people in exile not to remember the things of



the past or consider things of old, but "Behold" the new thing that God is doing.

God calls us to choose hope and trust, even when we are afraid of an uncertain future. We choose hope and trust by remembering that God has redeemed us, called us by name and we belong to God.

We've all heard the phrase "So, what's new?" But seldom do we seek to perceive what new thing God may be doing in our midst. And, all too seldom we do not attempt to discern what new thing God may be calling us to do.

So, what's new?

As you may have heard in recent months, Gary Church has been in conversation with Aldersgate UMC in Wheaton to discuss the possibility of our congregations merging. Clergy and lay leaders from both congregations have been meeting together, worshiping together, working together in mission, praying together and fellowshiping together. We have been exploring ways that we might be faithful to our pasts while we seek to reach more people, be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us, and glimpse the vision that God has for us. I believe that we are better together.

Our congregations have much in common. Both congregations are driven by mission, have a desire to make a difference in our world, hold a passion for vital worship, believe in growing in faith in Christ Jesus and seek to be God's instruments to transform our world.

In the United Methodist Church, mergers require official votes from each congregation. In the coming weeks we will share more about what we see as possibilities for our life together. To that end, I extend an invitation. I invite you to be in prayer with us during our discernment process. I invite you to share your heart and voice with us, through questions or encouragement. And, yes, I invite you to behold a new thing that God is doing in our midst.

Christopher L. Preere



IS THE DIRECTION

Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God; and everyone who loves
is born of God and knows God. —1 JOHN 4:7

ADULT

Christian Education and Discipleship

Explore Membership

Sunday, Jan. 8, 10 a.m., Chapel

Those considering membership at Gary



Church or are new members are invited to get better acquainted with pastors and staff, learn more about what it means to be United Methodist and about the history of the Gary congregation. Contact **Jennifer Castino** at jcastino@garychurch.org to learn more.

Launch: A Class on Spiritual Habits for Parents and Young Adults

Sundays, Jan. 15 & Feb. 12, 10 a.m., Commons
led by Beth Orchard

Whether you've been attending church since you were a kid or you're brand new, you probably have some ideas already about what it takes to grow spiritually. The problem is, we all struggle sometimes to figure out how to continue growing — and how to do it in a way that works for us now. If we're not careful, we can end up with a relationship with God that worked when we were kids or new to our faith but is no longer transforming or challenging us like it could be. In this class, we'll see how we can "launch" (or re-launch) our spiritual growth by evaluating (or re-evaluating) these spiritual habits of spending time with God, spending time with others in healthy community, using our gifts to serve and sharing our stories of faith.

Holy Lament

Sundays, Jan. 15 & 22, 10 a.m., Chapel, led by Ph.D. candidate Daniel Somboonsiri

In this class we examine lament in the Bible to enhance our understanding and practice of worship. Lament is prevalent throughout scripture, yet scarcely present in American worship, which celebrates success and suppresses suffering. In this class you will recover this forgotten practice through Bible study and practical exercises.

Parent Workshop

Sunday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m., Commons
See page 6 for details.

Educating Girls: A World of Opportunity

Sunday, Jan. 29, 10 a.m., Chapel
See page 10 for details.

Faith Club: An Interfaith Discussion Group to read *A Place for Us*

Tuesday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m., Commons E and Zoom

Gary Church women are invited to discuss the award-winning 2019 novel *A Place for Us* by Fatima Farheen Mirza. Described as "an astonishingly tender-hearted novel of identity and belonging, and a resonant portrait of what it means to be an American family today," the story centers on an Indian-American Muslim family gathered for the eldest daughter's wedding. The Faith Club brings together women of Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths to develop community and learn from and about one another. Contact **Kim Austin** through the Church Office to be added to the email list.



Anti-Racist Book Club

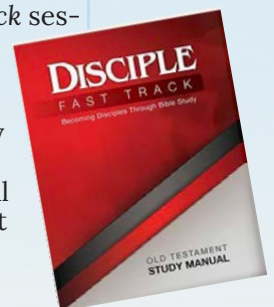
Wednesday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m., Commons

To be part of the discussion and receive more information, register at garychurch.org.

Disciple Fast Track: Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Thursdays, 7 p.m., Anderson Room
led by Rev. Dr. Jamie Hanna Williams

Studying the Bible is essential to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. *Disciple Fast Track*, an adaptation of the original, best-selling *Disciple Bible Study*, provides a viable option for busy people seeking comprehensive engagement with the entire Biblical text. The group will start on the New Testament in January. Each *Disciple Fast Track* session will be based on weekly reading, engaging videos and thoughtful discussion. Participants will have the opportunity to take a spiritual gifts assessment and determine meaningful ways they can serve and live out their discipleship commitment. Register at garychurch.org.



More opportunities

Contact the Church Office or go to garychurch.org for more information about these educational and fellowship opportunities.

Worship Talk

Sundays, 11 a.m., Zoom
Find Zoom code at garychurch.org

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays, 2 p.m., Anderson Room

Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Commons E

Grief Matters Support Group

Will meet again in the spring. Look to future editions of the *Chimes* and e-news for information.



Class Meetings

various days, times and locations

Contact **Pastor Brian** at bjones@garychurch.org for more information about these transformative small groups.



Game night

Fourth Friday of the month, 6:30–9 p.m.
Commons

Join your Gary Church friends for games of bridge, dominoes or anything you like. Contact **Fern Evelhoch** through the Church Office for more information and to let us know you're coming.



Create cards

Thursdays, 1 p.m., Heritage Room

Anyone is welcome to drop in whenever you can to create cards. The cards go to people celebrating milestone birthdays and anniversaries. They go to people grieving or sick. And, the cards go to people to simply let them know their friends at Gary Church are thinking about them.



United Women in Faith Circles

various days, times and locations



United
Women
in Faith

Contact the Church Office for more information about these small groups that develop supportive relationships and help missions.

Walkers & Talkers Fellowship

Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Zoom;
Thursdays, 9:30 a.m., Commons

Stop in and chat with this welcoming fellowship group. Contact the Church Office or go to garychurch.org for the Tuesday Zoom code and simply come to the Commons on Thursdays.



Happy New Year! We can't wait to get started on a new year of ministry with you and your kids.

what we're teaching

Measure Up

"When I'm older!" "When I'm taller!" Every kid is excited to grow up – even if it's just to finally ride that big kid roller coaster they've had their eye on. This four-week series is about another kid who grew up – Jesus! Through stories from Jesus' early life and ministry, kids will learn five important truths to help them continue growing: God guides us to safety, we can love God with our actions, we can follow Jesus, God makes us ready at the right time, and God's words help us make wise choices.



what's happening

Parent's Night Out

Friday, Jan. 13, 6:30–9:30 p.m., Lower Level

Drop off your kiddos at Gary Church and enjoy some well-deserved time away. Register children ages 2–11 at garychurch.org. Suggested cash donation of \$5 per child.

4th & 5th Grade Fellowship Roller Skating Party

Friday, Jan. 20, 7–9 p.m., Lombard Roller Rink

Fourth and fifth grade students are invited to Lombard Roller Rink for a fun night of skating with friends. Cost is \$10 per person. RSVP to **Pastor Carey** at cbebar@garychurch.org.



Parent Workshop

Sunday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m., Commons

Gary Kids parents are invited to this special session where they will hear about the Gary Kids vision for the year and how it helps children grow in faith.

Sledding & Hot Cocoa

Sunday, Jan. 29, 2 p.m., Northside Park

Bundle up and bring your sleds for this fun family fellowship event! (Weather dependent.)

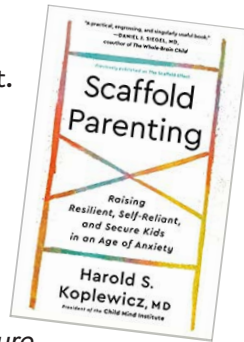




Parent Resource of the Month

Scaffold Parenting: Raising Resilient, Self-Reliant, and Secure Kids in an Age of Anxiety
by Harold S. Koplewicz

Scaffolding is an essential piece of any large construction project. Within an intentional structure that supports the work and the workers for a while, and then can be easily removed when it's time for the building to stand on its own – the project could never be completed. Check out *Scaffold Parenting: Raising Resilient, Self-Reliant, and Secure Kids in an Age of Anxiety* for some ideas as to how parenting may have more in common with scaffolding than you think.

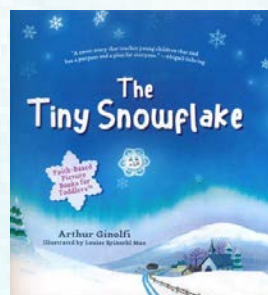


Third graders receive certificates in worship for completing a Bible class.

Children's Book of the Month

The Tiny Snowflake by Arthur Ginolfi

Swirling her way through a quiet, wintry night, Lacy the snowflake longs to discover what makes her special. All the other snowflakes around her all seem to have their special purpose, whether it's making the snow soft or deep or slippery. But what is Lacy's purpose? With a little help from friends along the way, she soon finds her unique place among God's creation.



Preschoolers and kindergartners learn they can talk to God anywhere, anytime about anything.

Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year, or “Seollal”, is a national holiday in Korea commemorating the first day of the lunar calendar year. It is one of the most important holidays in both North and South Korea. The celebration usually lasts three days, starting the day before New Year’s to the day after New Year’s. Families wear “hanbok” (traditional Korean clothing), perform ancestral rites, make and eat special Korean cuisines and play games. Children also receive “sebaetdon” (money) if they perform a traditional bow for their elders. In 2023, Lunar New Year’s is celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 22. Gary Youth are invited to join **Pastor Dan**, **Stacey** and **Mina** to celebrate Seollal together. They will be wearing their hanboks! Sorry, no sebaetdon.



In 2022, middle school and high school Gary Youth made dumplings called “mandoo” and played “yootnori”.

What are we learning in January?



If someone asked who you are, what would you say? Maybe you’d say your name. Or maybe you’d say, “I’m a musician. A basketball player. A friend. A daughter or son. I’m a human!” Those things might be true, but have you ever felt like you’re still figuring out who you are, what you’re good at, or why you’re here? In this series, the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the words of Paul, will help us see why discovering who Jesus is helps us discover who we’re meant to be. Not only is Jesus distinct from anyone who has ever lived, but God made us distinct too, with distinct gifts we can use to serve God and others, and unique distinctions that are worth celebrating.

Sunday School

10–11 a.m.

Middle school: Commons E

High school: Heritage Room

January Weekly Gathering

Middle School:

Wednesdays, 7–8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Lunar New Year Celebration

Wednesday, Jan. 25

No meeting

(prepare for Winter Chill)

High School:

Sundays, 7–8:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 1

No meeting (Happy New Year!)

Sunday, Jan. 15

Lunar New Year Celebration

Sunday, Jan. 22

No meeting

(Happy Lunar New Year!)

Sunday, Jan. 29

No meeting (Winter Chill)

Winter Retreat

Winter Chill

Friday, Jan. 27– Sunday, Jan. 29

Every year, during the winter season, Gary Youth takes some time away to Conference Point at Lake Geneva. Over the weekend, we worship together, go sledding, take in the fresh air, and hang out together. Winter Chill is a great time for some relaxation and rejuvenation connecting with nature, God and each other. Come and join us! Visit our youth page at garychurch.org to register by *Thursday, Jan. 12*. Scholarships are available.



Questions? Contact **Pastor Dan** at DLee@garychurch.org.

Gary Youth High School Mission Trip

Informational meeting:

Sunday, Jan. 8, 5–6 p.m.

Mission Trip: Sunday, July 23–Saturday, July 29

Congratulations Pastor Dan!



Dan Lee received United Voices for Children's 2022 Rev. Margaret Ann Williams Service Award for "exemplifying the joy of serving children, the church, and the community within the Northern Illinois Conference." Congratulations Dan!



GARY CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The 2023 Gary Church mission year kicks off with Educate A Girl — Change The World. This impactful program helps girls and young women across the globe receive life-changing education.

We thank you for your past gifts to Educate A Girl and kindly request that you once again support this powerful mission, which lifts up the girls and their communities.

Our fundraising goal this year for Educate A Girl is \$7,200, which will continue scholarships for eight students in Kenya, Cambodia and Zimbabwe. We also hope to add a new scholarship for an indigenous student in the U.S.

You and your family can learn about and support the education of girls around the world through several opportunities:

January–February: Financial Donations (cash, check or at garychurch.org)

Sunday, Jan. 22: Mission Moment during 9 a.m. worship, followed by a bake & craft sale (Thank you to our United Women of Faith Circles for their homemade treats and craft items.)

Sunday, Jan. 29: Adult Education at 10 a.m.: “Educating Girls – A World of Opportunity” – learn about the challenges, benefits and many ways to support the education of girls.

January–February: Gary Youth will learn about EAG and our scholarship recipients.

The lives of these girls and young women are being transformed because YOU – Gary Church – continue to actively care for and invest in our neighbors across the globe. God bless you!

Cathy Mousseau & Judy Selby

Luxene thrives at Africa University

Luxene will enter her final year at Africa University (AU) next fall working on her degree in International Relations. With your continued support, Gary Church can help Luxene achieve her dream of a college graduation in 2024 — a great blessing to her and all of us. Despite personal hardships during college, Luxene has persevered, blossomed, and succeeded during the past two years with Gary Church's financial support and encouragement.



Luxene thanks Gary Church

"Wow — I cannot believe it! Thank you for the messages and the powerful words and the love you all have for me! I pray that God continues to give me courage to fight so I can make you all proud of me!"

At 13, Sarah loves to dance

In Cambodia, your giving supports the education of five Cambodian girls in their teens. Our newest scholarship recipient is Sarah, a seventh grader. She loves to dance and make music videos. Sarah's dream is to become a doctor to help save the lives of those in need. Gary Church scholarships will pay for extra classes (such as English), books and internet expenses.



Sarah's prayers are answered

"Thank you, Lord, for answering my prayers and for the prayers and support from Gary Methodist Church! May God Bless you all!"

Angel plans to be a teacher

Angel is in fourth grade at Kinyago Dandora School, a beacon of Christian light in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Angel recently shared, "I work hard in school so that when I grow up I will become a teacher so that I can teach and educate my community. I love my teacher." This is the third year that Gary Church will provide scholarships for Angel and her schoolmate, Gloria, a first grader.



Gifts for an Angel

Angel shared, "I was happy to receive the card and bookmark... the photos of our friends at Gary Church making the bookmarks for us were beautiful." Angel used her birthday gift from Gary Church to purchase a school uniform, shoes, socks, a birthday cake, and shorts for her brother.

Kayla dreams of becoming a nurse

In 2022, Educate A Girl Supported an "I Gotchu" scholarship awarded to Kayla, a nursing student at University of Illinois — Chicago. Kayla grew up in the North Lawndale neighborhood and participated in teen programs at MyBlockMyHoodMyCity, making her eligible for "I Gotchu".



I Gotchu Scholarships

These wrap-around scholarships, which come with mentoring support, are often the key enabler for students to achieve life-changing education.



**Educate a Girl
Bake & Craft Sale**
Sunday, Jan. 22
Commons

What's the deal with singing in foreign languages? by Jennifer Whiting

In an ancient place called Babel, “the whole world had one language and a common speech” (Gen. 11:1 NIV).

You know what happened next. People made bricks and built a high tower so they would not “be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” Hmm... God had commanded people to fill the earth.

So, “the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.” Can you imagine their shock and panic?

This origin story shows that God created our remarkable diversity. But because we are sinful, our differences often bring out discord and strife.

About 2,000 years later, Jesus entered history to restore unity and love. Then God did something remarkable to make a clear point. When the disciples were gathered at Pentecost, “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4 NIV).

Jews from all over the known world “heard their own language being spoken.” They were utterly amazed!

Pentecost is the undoing of Babel. Our prejudices crumble. Fears melt. God makes us one.

This is precisely why our choirs sing in foreign languages whenever possible: to honor Jesus’ beautiful work that makes us one with God’s children in every language.

This is also why the translation of each foreign song is necessary! Paul wrote, “I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. If anyone speaks in a tongue, someone must interpret” (from I Cor. 14 NIV).

When the Friendship Singers sing “Siakudumisa,” they step into fellowship with people of South Africa. The congregation listens with understanding when they read the translation, “We praise your name, O God!”

When the Chancel Choir sings “Ubi caritas” in Latin, they embrace fellowship with sisters and brothers who have sung the same words for centuries. The congregation worships with understanding when they read, “Where charity and love are, God is here.”

Indeed, God is here! God is in our hearts and in our music. God inhabits the praises of people in every language. We realize our “mystic union” when we hear and sing diverse languages.

We do not need to build a tower to protect ourselves from scattering. We freely celebrate our spiritual family over the whole earth.

“Amen siakudumisa!”

“Amen, we praise your name, O God!”



Gary Church's choirs welcome you

Chancel Choir welcomes all high school and adult singers. *Join them on Thursdays, 7–8:30 p.m. in the Choir Room.* You will find a warm welcome. For more information, please contact **Jennifer Whiting** at jwhiting@garychurch.org.

The Men's Chorus welcomes all tenors and basses. *Join them on Saturdays, 8–9 a.m. in the Choir Room* for friendly fellowship and hearty singing. For more information, please contact **Phil Roberts** through the Church Office.

Friendship Singers develops music literacy, vocal production, ear training and Christian formation for students in grades 1–5. *They meet in the Chapel each Wednesday, 6–6:45 p.m.* **Jennifer Whiting and Katie Gibbons** are happy to answer your questions. To register a child for Friendship Singers, go to garychurch.org.

Cherub Choir is an interactive music and singing class for children ages 3 through kindergarten. One adult participates with each child in this fun time for togetherness through music. *They meet in the Choir Room each Wednesday, 6–6:30 p.m.* To register a child for Cherub Choir, go to garychurch.org.

GARY CHURCH *makes a difference*

Donate meal “extras” to the PRC

A client at the People’s Resource Center helped empty my trunk of the Gary Church donation and offered some suggestions for us. She said it would be nice to get the “extras”



that complete the meal. By that she meant the vanilla flavoring, the baking soda/powder, the lemon juice, the salt/pepper, the herbs and spices, the Worcestershire, the hot sauce. You get the picture?

We decided to devote January to a special donation of items used in cooking and baking. Please help us fill the PRC shelves with these items. Drop off donations in the bin near the Sanctuary.

We thank you for your support!

Mary Landreth

Christmas Sharing thanks you

Thank you to all who donated money, participated in dine out events, bought diapers and volunteered at Christmas Sharing. You have made a difference in the lives of District 200 families in need. In the February edition of the *Chimes*, we'll share more detailed information about the event and the families we served. Christmas Sharing collects monetary donations year-round. If you would like to contribute, go to garychurch.org/give.



Styrofoam recycling dates announced

Sundays, Jan. 15, April 16, July 16, Oct. 15
8:45–10:30 a.m., South Driveway

Bring your Styrofoam to church, and we will recycle it for you. Please separate clean food containers from other Styrofoam. No packing peanuts. If you miss the date, feel free to drop off Styrofoam at Dart Container Corporation, 310 Evergreen Dr., North Aurora.



Save the dates for blood drives

Wednesdays, Feb. 15, May 17, Aug. 23 and Nov. 29
2–6 p.m., Commons

Each pint donated can save up to three lives. The need is constant, and every pint is precious. Can you help? Register in advance at garychurch.org/registrations.



Gary Church hosts CROP Walk

Sunday, May 7, Check in at 1 p.m.
Walk begins at 2 p.m.

Mark your calendar for the 2023 CROP Walk on May 7! Gary Church will host 10 churches from the Wheaton/Glen Ellyn area as we walk together to raise awareness and funds for the fight against hunger.

As the host of this year’s event, we will need volunteers to help with check in, set up/tear down and managing the route, and, of course, we’ll need lots of walkers on our Gary Church team. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact **Judy Selby** through the Church Office.

This event will be an opportunity to share Gary’s warm, welcoming and energetic spirit with our community! Watch for more information in the e-news.



Welcome Team Spotlight

Welcome Desk Hosts

by Jennifer Castino

On a recent afternoon as my son flew in the door from school, he dropped his backpack on our mudroom bench without so much as a downward glance and kept moving toward the kitchen (middle schoolers need a lot of snacks). “He wouldn’t even have noticed if that bench wasn’t there!” I thought, chuckling to myself.

Often in familiar places we get so used to the layout and the objects around us that we don’t “see” them anymore. Does this happen for you on Sundays at Gary Church? Perhaps as you move toward the Sanctuary for worship you no longer notice our Welcome Desk with a host ready to greet new visitors. Yet these hosts play a vital role in welcoming newcomers to Gary. They are always on the lookout for unfamiliar faces. Often when I follow up with visitors, the first thing they mention is the warm reception they received at our Welcome Desk. Hosts not only greet visitors, they get to know them a bit, collect contact information, answer questions and share about the life of Gary Church. We are grateful to our Welcome Desk hosts for sharing God’s radical hospitality with our guests and visitors.



Phyllis Geyer, longtime Gary Church member and Welcome Desk host, shares how she came to serve on the Welcome Team:

Why did you first start serving on the Welcome Desk?

I know and believe being a church member is more than financial support. I chose serving at the Welcome Desk as a stewardship commitment because I know how it feels to be welcomed when new and also when coming each Sunday.

What do you enjoy about serving on the Welcome Desk?

I enjoy meeting new people, welcoming those I do not know as they attend worship, classes, events and participate in mission. It is great to see the smiles and energy of children as they come to worship and attend Kids’ Church.

Why should people consider becoming Welcome Desk hosts?

The church is a community. It takes a lot of people to witness for Christ at Gary Church, and this is one of the many ways you can do that. You feel worthwhile and receive positive feedback about the people and the church. I see LOVE when I serve on the Welcome Desk!

Welcome Desk hosts serve once a month or as often as they like. We are currently welcoming new members to the Welcome Team to greet, usher and host at the Welcome Desk. To join the Welcome Team or sign up to serve as a substitute, please contact the Church Office.



2023 Stewardship Campaign

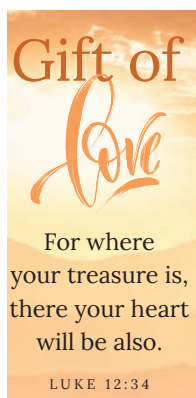
Thank you to all who have already returned their stewardship cards or online forms for 2023. We appreciate your commitment to sharing your spiritual and financial gifts with and through Gary Church. Your giving is a gift of love.

For those who have not yet had the opportunity to return the card, it is not too late. Contact the Church Office for a copy, or you may also go to the registrations page at garychurch.org to complete the "Stewardship Campaign: Gift of Love" as well as the "Get Connected" forms.

Seven ways to give

Gary Church provides many opportunities to give throughout the year:

1. *Text*: text an amount to (844) 928-1220
2. *Online*: set up a one-time or recurring payment directly from your bank account or credit card by going to garychurch.org/give
3. *Sunday morning offertory*: leave your gift in the collection plates on Sunday
4. *Mail*: mail checks from home or through your bank to Gary UMC, 224 N. Main Street, Wheaton, IL 60187
5. *Matching gifts*: check with your employer about a matching gift program. Many will match financial gifts and/or volunteer hours.
6. *Planned giving*: name Gary Church as a beneficiary in your estate planning. Talk to your financial advisor or legal counsel for more information.
7. *Stocks*: transfer stocks to Gary Church. Contact **Deb Evans** in the Church Office for more information.



Thank you for your generous giving.

Aldersgate UMC – Gary Church Merger Listening Sessions

Sundays

Jan. 8 and 15, 8:30–9 a.m. and 10–10:45 a.m.

Commons

Thursday, Jan. 12, 6:30–8 p.m., Zoom

Learn the latest information about the potential merger between Aldersgate UMC and Gary Church. Check the e-news for the Zoom link.



Fund flowers for the altar

Many Sundays are available in 2023 to provide flowers for the altar. If you'd like to give flowers, fill out the form on the registrations page of garychurch.org or contact the Church Office. The cost of the flowers is \$35.



Preschool chatter

At snack time, one preschooler asked in a somewhat awed voice, “Do you know that God is always with us?” Before snack time (a favorite part of the day for many of the preschoolers), the teachers lead the children in a prayer. It is simple prayer:

“I fold my hands and then I say my thank you prayer to God today for (the snack of the day) and juicy juice (or water) too. Dear God, may I say thank you? Thank you, God.”

It doesn’t take long for the preschoolers to learn the prayer and soon their voices are loud and clear (and super cute!), especially when they say thank you to God. Seeing the love of Jesus and God in the hearts of our preschoolers is such a gift. Indeed, God is always with us!

Love your preschool

On Sunday, Feb. 12, come visit the Preschool Board and staff in the Commons between services. We are collecting donations to replace faded puzzles and other materials in the preschool. With a gift of \$20, you can help the preschool replace a puzzle! As a thank you for any level of donation, you will receive a preschooler-made card to give to a loved one for Valentine’s Day or just because!



Preschoolers keep cozy on pajama day.

Open now: Preschool Registration for 2023-2024

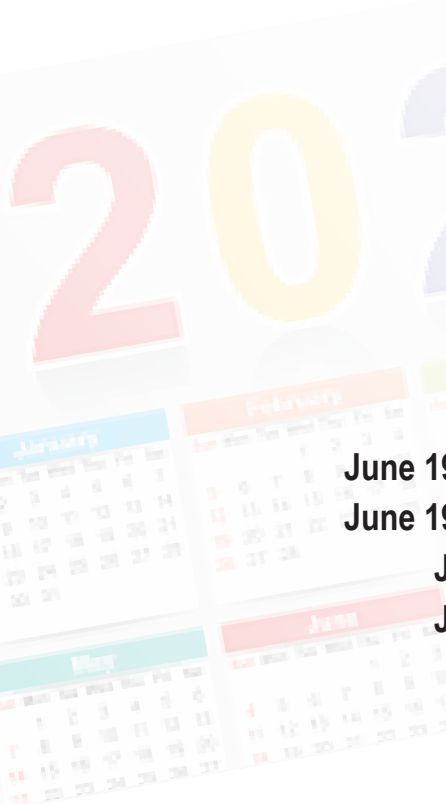
Preschool and PMO registration is now open to all community members. Recommendations from neighbors or friends carry a lot of weight for our prospective families, so please continue to spread the word about our programs at Gary Church.

We offer a 3-year-old preschool class on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and a 4-year-old preschool class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Our preschool program is play-based with a theme of the week that guides the activities and materials in the classroom. Learning opportunities are all around us whether we are building with blocks, playing in the kitchen or painting at the easel. We meet for group times to discuss ideas from the weekly themes, as well as read stories, sing songs, share felt boards and more. While the morning allows for a lot of free exploration, we do keep a routine and have classroom expectations and rules for behavior to prepare them for kindergarten, as well as keep a happy and productive preschool classroom.

We also offer a Parents’ Morning Out program for younger children, which runs Monday–Friday. Families can register for one, two or three days a week. Our program opens for children as young as 18 months and is a great way for little ones to “enter school” and begin to spend some time away from parents or other caregivers. In PMO, children spend most of their time in free play with opportunities to explore art supplies and various sensory materials. There is a group snack time with stories and songs. The children also spend some time playing in our indoor playground, which has large foam blocks, balls and space to run. The teachers change diapers and assist in potty training, following the parents’ directions.

Enrollment is simple. Just return a completed application with a \$100 registration fee, payable to “Gary Preschool.” If you would like to schedule an appointment to visit our preschool and PMO programs you may do so by calling the church or emailing **Kirsten McCluskey** at preschool@garychurch.org.

Mark the dates on your 2023 calendar*



Jan. 15	Human Relations Day
Jan. 27–29	Gary Youth Winter Chill retreat
Jan. 29	Fifth Sunday Appeal for United Voices for Children
Feb. 12	Scout Sunday
Feb. 22	Ash Wednesday
March 19	UMCOR Sunday
April 2	Palm Sunday
April 9	Easter Sunday
April 16	Gary Youth Fundraiser
April 30	Fifth Sunday Appeal for United Voices for Children
May 7	CROP Walk
June 4	Peace with Justice Sunday
June 4	Step Up Sunday (students “step up” to next grade)
June 19–June 22	VBS (preschool–grade 4)
June 19–June 22	BLAST Camp (grade 5–grade 8)
July 20–23	Family Camp
July 23–29	Gary Youth High School Mission Trip
July 30	Fifth Sunday Appeal for United Voices for Children
Aug. 20	Worship in the Park
Aug. 27	All-Church Training
Sept. 3	Bike to Church
Sept. 10	Kickoff Sunday
Sept. 17	Confirmation Sunday
Oct. 1	World Communion Sunday
Oct. 28	Trunk or Treat
Oct. 29	Fifth Sunday Appeal for United Voices for Children
Nov. 26	United Methodist Student Day
Dec. 3	First Sunday of Advent
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve services
Dec. 31	Fifth Sunday Appeal for United Voices for Children

*All dates are subject to change. Please check the e-news for the latest information.

The dates in blue represent worldwide United Methodist Special Sunday celebrations.

January Birthdays*

Happy (90+) birthday to:
Barbara Zima

Our sympathy

Dick and Julie Raab on the death of Julie's uncle, Ted Balbach, on Oct. 9.

Rachel Pangilinan, Richelle, Michael, Aria and Christian Villaneuva, on the death of Rachel's sister, Judith delMundo Cordova, on Oct. 24.

The family of Jim Smith. Jim passed away on Oct. 29.

Cindy Sennese on the death of her son, Joe Sennese, on Nov. 7.

The family of Pastor Jan Sutfin, wife of the late Roger Sutfin (former Gary member). Pastor Jan passed away on Oct. 28.

Dave, Sandy, Hannah, Emma and Tom Koropp on the death of Sandy's mom on Nov. 13.

Dave, Teresa, Meggie and Jesse Exner on the death of Teresa's father, Paul Congdon, on Nov. 13.

Joe Purpura on the death of his wife, Rona Purpura, on Nov. 22.

The friends of Linda Lischer. Linda passed away in November.

*If we've missed your special day, please contact the Church Office. We'd love to include the date in our records.

Contribute to Lenten Devotional

We're looking for contributors (both new and returning) for our annual Lenten Devotional. It's a beautiful compilation of personal stories of God at work sent to your email inbox throughout Lent. Take a photo. Write a poem. Draw a picture. Maybe a recent sermon or scripture passage has touched you. Or maybe our theme for the year "Love Is the Direction" has moved you.

We invite all children, youth and adults of Gary, Aldersgate and Winfield Churches to share reflections, personal stories and glimpses of God at work in our lives. If you know you'd like to share something, please register at garychurch.org by Friday, Jan. 13.

You're welcome to email your devotional before Friday, Feb. 3 to **Janet Mathis** jmathis@garychurch.org.

Thank you

I am a college student who received a care package from Gary filled with many sweet treats. I was dealing with a lot of stressful things on top of having a very full course load. When I opened the package and read the lovely card, my week was instantly brightened! It really came at the perfect time. God works in wonderful ways and I am very thankful for such a caring church family. I just wanted to say thank you, the package meant a lot to me!

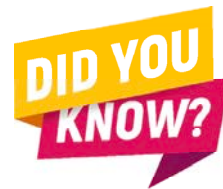
Blessings,
Anne Lovett

Thank you so much for the beautiful and plentiful donations of fresh vegetables that you brought to the Interfaith Food Pantry many, many times throughout the summer. There were plenty of smiles from our families as they saw the produce; fresh items are always requested.

Our Pantry serves an average of 200+ families each month. We now serve any family who comes for assistance in addition to the six communities that we always served pre-COVID. We are seeing a number of refugee families coming for help as well.

On behalf of the families we serve and our volunteer staff at the Pantry, please accept our gratitude for your support of this ministry.

Very truly yours,
Mary Newman
Secretary, Interfaith Food Pantry



Most of the photos Gary Church uses for the *Chimes*, website, social media and more come from people who snap a shot at an event. Whatever group you're in or event you attend, please take a photo (especially of smiling people) and send it to **Janet Mathis**, jmathis@garychurch.org. Who knows? Your photo might make the cover of the *Chimes* or go viral on social media!

WinChimes

Winfield Community United Methodist Church

Faith in future

by Rev. Bruce Anderson

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? ...

Matthew 6:25-34



Happy New Year! The new year is before us, with all the opportunities and challenges it might bring. But isn't that always the case? Our verses from Matthew attest to that. But for those of us who follow Christ, there is one certainty, that we are secure in the hands of God.

Things often turn out differently than we hoped they would, but our lives, and our future are safe with God.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

On Nov. 28, members of Winfield voted to merge with West Chicago UMC. Hopefully a merger between two churches can jump-start something better for both congregations as we try a new thing for God's kingdom. All we can do is try to judge the leadings of God's Spirit and go where that takes us, in faith. New things offer a lot of hope, as well as a number of unknowns. All we can do is step out in faith into the future that God provides, for we cannot add a single hour to our lifespan by worrying. In fact, it is probably the opposite.

We are excited to begin our new journey and are planning to begin worshipping together at West Chicago UMC for Lent, beginning Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22.

May God bless us all in the coming year. Amen!

Bishop Dan Schwerin assigned to the Northern Illinois Conference

The Committee on Episcopacy has assigned Bishop Dan Schwerin to the Northern Illinois Conference, effective Jan. 1, 2023. He has served as the assistant to the bishop in the Wisconsin Conference and has also served as a district superintendent and pastored in many contexts, including urban and rural churches.

"I've been your neighbor for many, many years. I am so grateful to be assigned to the Northern Illinois Annual Conference," said Schwerin. "You have a history of justice-seeking ministry that humbles me and makes me grateful to be called to be assigned to you. God equips what God calls, and we are called together into this moment. This moment depends on all of us. I look forward to making relationships with you, learning from you, and shepherding with you."

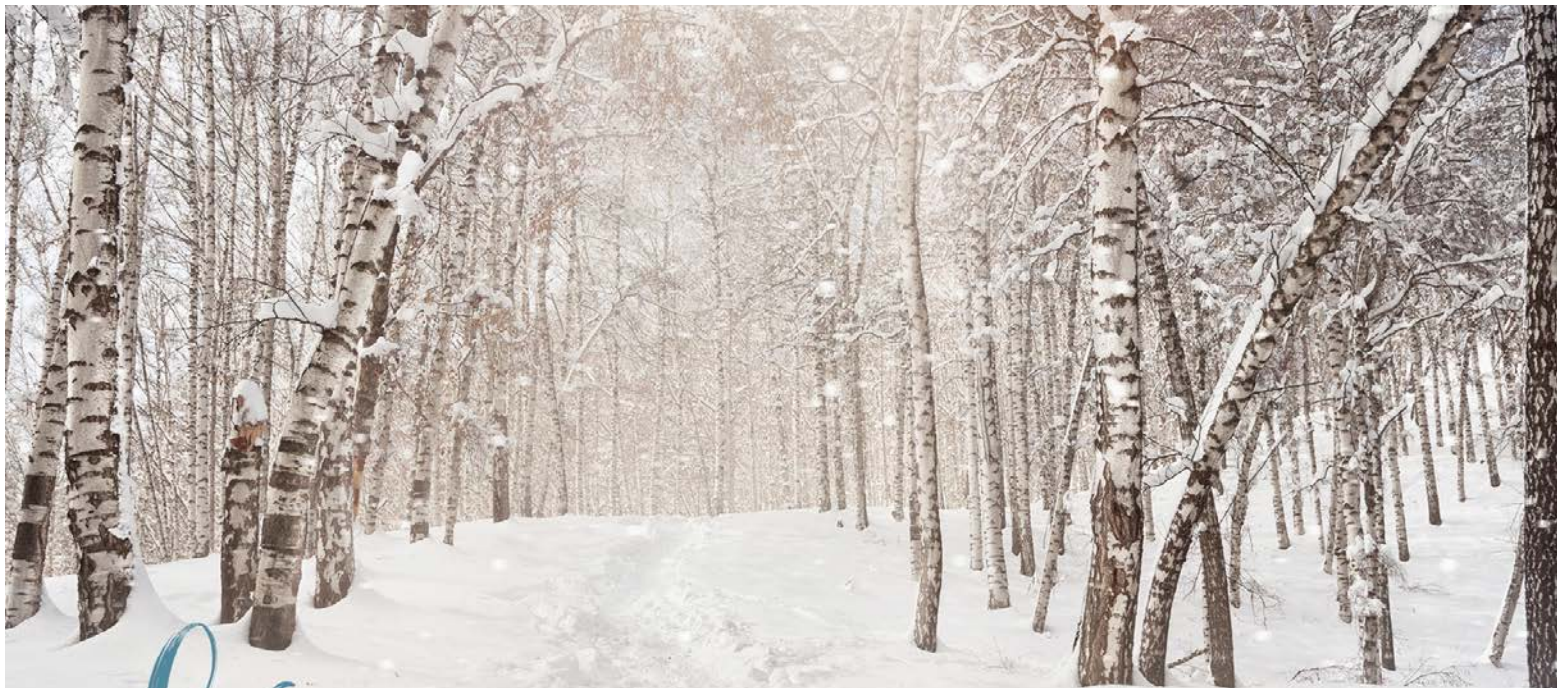




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Love

IS THE DIRECTION

Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God; and everyone who loves
is born of God and knows God. —1 JOHN 4:7

