

## Sunday Service is at 9:45 AM

- Jan. 4      Jeremiah 31:7-14  
              Ephesians 1:3-14  
              John 1:1-18
- Jan. 11     Isaiah 42:1-9  
              Acts 10:34-43  
              Matthew 3:13-17
- Jan. 18     Isaiah 49:1-7  
              1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
              John 1:29-42
- Jan. 25     Isaiah 9:1-4  
              1 Corinthians 1:10-18  
              Matthew 4:12-23

## HOW TO FIND US



### United Methodist Church Of Grand Rapids

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<https://www.youtube.com/c/GRUMC>



# January 2026

United Methodist Church  
Of Grand Rapids  
1701 SE 5th Avenue  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744



# RAPIDS CONNECTION

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10



**GROW**  
*in love of  
God and neighbor*

**REACH**  
*new people*

**HEAL**  
*a broken world*

**STAFF**

*Pastor*  
Rev. James Crecelius

*Administrator*  
Jodi Martin

*Accompanists*  
Susan Hoolihan

*Ready Set Grow  
Preschool*  
Mary Hanson  
Shari Tverberg

*Custodial*  
Louis Baumel

*Office Hours*  
Jodi:  
M-F, 9am-3pm

*Pastor Jim:*  
M-F, 9am-Noon &  
By appointment

*Louie:*  
Mondays - and as  
needed for special  
events

**CHRISTMAS FAMILIES:** Thank you so much for the contributions and support for the annual 10 Christmas Families. We were able to purchase gifts for the children and a gift for each parent as well as give gas and food gift cards to each family. Health and Human Service social workers told us how much of a blessing the gifts would be for each family!! A special thank you to the shoppers and gift wrappers for volunteering their time. We all enjoyed the morning of gift wrapping.

**SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING:** Thank you volunteers for bell ringing! We were able to fill all but 6 of the 24 shifts! A special thank you to Marie Duffy who picks up the money from the kettles each day.

**TOYS FOR TOTS:** We hosted the annual Toys For Tots distribution on December 12-13. We appreciate all that Kayleigh Svoboda does to make this a success. As of 12/20/25, they have served over 900 children. They are distributing toys right up until Christmas Eve.

**GRACE House:** Thank you to everyone who attended the annual GRACE House dinner. We had 48 guests from UMC! 412 guests were served at the dinner this year. This was the most successful dinner ever!!

**SHARON'S WIG CLOSET:** Sharon has served 4 women this month. They are all happy to be able to work with Sharon for the best wig for them. All of the women served this year are so thankful and happy that they don't have to drive to Aitkin for a wig. What a blessing the Wig Closet is for our community!

**DIVORCECARE** will start again on Monday, January 5 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Please share the information!

*We don't expect everyone to donate and/or volunteer for every opportunity we present, but we hope that you will prayerfully consider missions that speak to your heart!*

## UMCGR Endowment Fund NEWS

When Jesus was born. He was born into a culture where the Roman Empire was fueled by the love of power. He came to declare that God's Empire was fueled by power of love.



In this new year may our work and ministry of the church be fueled by the power of love as we support our ministry through our General Fund, Special Purpose Funds and the Endowment Fund. May God bless and guide us in all that we do.

Happy New Year! 2026....2026! After leaving the theater, I spent two years working with church youth groups in central Illinois to see if this sense that I was being called to the ministry was a real calling or not. Following those two years I enrolled at Christian theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN. to obtain my M. Div. Jodel and I moved to Flat Rock, IN. (town population 183) where I became a Student Local Pastor in the Indiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church serving the Flat Rock UMC congregation! That was 1986. So, this year marks my 40th year in leading churches. Oy! Am I old!! Still, it is a new year and I continue to be thrilled with being in ministry! I can tell because I'm as excited and filled with anticipation for what God is doing in the church I serve now as I was back in tiny Flat Rock UMC all those years ago!!

As you read this column, we'll have finished Christmas & Christmastide and are now in the "Season after the Epiphany". An epiphany, according to Mr. Webster's book, is defined as, "a visionary moment when a character has a sudden insight or realization...". The Joy of Christmas moves to the discovery of what the Christmas event can mean in our lives. Those new discoveries lead to a new awareness and are the "epiphany(ies)" that lead us into deeper discipleship as we seek to follow the Christ.

The first Sunday of this season begins with the story of Jesus' baptism and the Last Sunday's lesson is the Transfiguration where Jesus goes to the top of a mountain with Peter, James, and John where he is "Transfigured" and appears to the three disciples in his glorified state. The Sunday Gospel readings through Epiphany center on stories from the early ministry of Christ.

While we celebrated the ancient story of the birth of Christ at Christmas, this new season following Epiphany can allow us the opportunities of "sudden insight or realization" of what the possibilities, outcomes, new ideas & new practices, and more intentional discipleship might mean for us as a congregation and personally for you and me! Science Friday on NPR is one of my favorite radio programs. On that show, the host looks at some of the top Science stories of the past week or month. It's amazing all the new discoveries and research that is happening and what the possibilities are for the future! Just as Science Friday names the top stories of what's happening in the world of science, so I invite you to think through what are the "Top Stories" in your life - and what might that mean for your spiritual journey in this new year, and how might this deepen your relationship with Christ and grow you as his disciple?

Let me encourage you in four responses to this season of Epiphany:

- 1) Make Sunday Worship a high Priority. Come, gather with your faith family regularly building bonds of deep friendship and connectedness to your family of faith. If you do come very often already, take a role in the worship leadership on Sunday mornings as an Usher, Greeter, Lay Reader, Communion Steward, join the choir, help with the Tech Team, or help serve during the fellowship time following worship service.
- 2) Read more scripture; if you're wanting specific ideas, one that got me hooked on reading scripture was reading two of the gospels and seeing what's unique to each and what's similar between the two. When folk come to me asking where they might want to start reading in the bible, I often recommend the Gospel of John, the book of James, or First John, or Isaiah. [Most anywhere is a good place to start – how about the beginning: Genesis!]
- 3) Start or build on a devotional practice of prayer and reflection.
- 4) Begin or build on a health discipline of exercise and healthy lifestyle.

As we move into this season of new insight, new discoveries, new possibilities, new opportunities, and new awareness – may God lead us as a faith family while we seek to become the Resurrection People; living as Beloved Community as the Body of Christ we are called to be.

Be God's,

Pastor Jim





November 2025 Monthly Snap Shot			
	Income	Expenses	Net Income
General Fund	29,893	21,779	8,114
YTD - 2025	272,727	271,470	1,257
Monthly average - 2025	24,234	24,679	(445)

Our Advance monthly offering YTD is \$49,904. The above monthly average amount has been adjusted to account for this. Thank you for your continued support of the day to day ministry of our church. We try to be careful stewards of your gifts.

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### News From The Finance Committee:

By the time you read this Christmas will be, hopefully, another wonderful memory. It is always exciting to start a new year with the anticipation of reaching new goals, receiving unexpected blessings, and meeting new friends. Being on the finance committee is sometimes not the easiest or the most fun, but working with people committed to the UMC and it's missions and goals is very rewarding. It is with a deep feeling of gratitude that our committee thanks the whole congregation for trusting us to do our best to use your gifts as you wish and to take good care of UMC. Even though our proposed budget doesn't always balance, we appreciate you helping to make UMC truly a home that we all can take care of, take pride in, and share with the community. Thanks to you, it is a welcoming, warm, and happy home for our UMC family.

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### Online Giving - Change

**Attention those that donate online or use the QR Code. Our new online giving platform is up and running.**

**If you had a reoccurring contribution on the old system, you will need to set that up again. We apologize for any inconvenience. Scan the QR Code to donate online.**



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### Fireside Readers



At our last meeting we picked books for the next 6 months. They are as follows:

- January- Inside the Obrien's- Lisa Genova, neuroscientist writes about Huntington's and manages to be uplifting.
- February-Woman They Could Not Silence, by Kate Moore- A woman who challenged medical science of the day and freed herself and thousands more.
- March-The Other Einstein, by Marie Benedict- Einstein's wife
- April- The Good Left Undone, By Adriana Trigiani- Italy, with intersecting timelines shocking revelations and ultimately redemption
- May- Time of the Child, by Niall Williams- Foundling child, reviews say lyrical, laugh out loud
- June- Hummingbird, By Natalie Lloyd

We are Saving "The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus" for November.

## Youth News!



A very successful fall semester for our youth Fellowship! We started the program year with a wild “All-Around-Town” Scavenger Hunt. We went to the Rowe Funeral Home for a discussion on death and resurrection. We had one of our best attended Lock-Ins in years! We had guest speakers, crazy games (with DQ prizes!), honest and interesting discussions, grew in our faith and how to live it, made over \$300 in Cinnamon Roll sales, bought Christmas gifts for 3 families in need, added new members....and had a lot of fun doing it all!

This coming winter and spring we’re planning even more adventures! We’re off to Duluth for an over-night. We’re going to the twin-cities. We’re meeting with the Grand Rapids Police Chief and touring the courthouse. We’re working on a winter/spring retreat at Northern Pines and planning a Youth Sunday. All that in addition to our bi-monthly meetings on the first and third Sundays of each month at 6:30. Come, join the fun! (and bring a friend...or two!)

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## A Message Our Lay Leader:

It is the Christmas season, but as you read this a New Year begins ~ Where does time go? Or should we ask; How does the time go?

Some days I find myself taking each day for “me” rather than making each day for “God”. It can happen in a moments decision, and yet, it can be in that moment’s decision as we seek first the kingdom of God, we truly experience a day of gratitude in servitude.

As I seek **how** our time goes, choosing for God, I find more meaningful moments each day, and a new day becomes a blessed day, even in trials and sorrows and broken hearts. . . His promises are never ending— NEW each day! Giving us strength and comfort, encouragement and support to give love and peace to those in need around us. 2026 where a gift of God’s newness is received every morning, and a gift of how God can be shared and served every day.

There are blessings in each day, may we seek them in the wheres and share them in our hows.

May God’s embrace of love and peace, be new to you every morning ~ Blessed 2026!

Teresa



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## Star Sunday!

Last year started a new tradition in our congregation:

Star Sunday! Introduced to us by Sandy Grina from a previous congregation she had been a part of in a previous community, it’s based on the Star that guided the Magi to the Christ Child.

On Epiphany Sunday – the Sunday that focuses on the wise men (the first Sunday of the new year) there will be stars handed out through the congregation, each with a particular word from scripture or words on themes concerning faith.

The hope is that everyone will keep that star with its word and let it be a “guiding focus” for your faith journey through the coming year! I still have mine from last year: Responsiveness.

In Sandy’s previous congregation “Star Sunday” became one of the highest attended Sunday of the year! Come, take part in our second Annual “Star Sunday”; pick up your star and let the word upon it guide you as you seek to follow the Christ!



## Congregational Care & Hospitality

**Lumberjack Sunday is January 18th:** Join the fun! Wear your cozy lumberjack gear (flannel, buffalo plaid, wooly gear & socks). Worship the brave & courageous way. Then enjoy a hot, hearty meal and homemade METHODIST PIE We will play BINGO so please bring prizes in plain bags or boxes. Suggestions: White elephants, re-gifted items, or purchased/homemade food items. Invite friends or prospective members. Sign up to bake pie or bring food . **NEW FOR 2026:** Let's add potatoes along with macaroni and cheese to our menu of stew and beans. Serving and clean-up crews are also needed. It was 20 below for our 2025 event. Let's see what happens in 2026! Contact person is Nancy: 218-256-7711. **No soup please-it's harder to serve.**



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### MEET THE GMAL FAMILY



Holly and Jeremy Gmal credit Carlee Buchacker with introducing them to our church. They are impressed with how supportive and friendly of a church we are! Holly is a labor and delivery nurse at Grand Itasca and Jeremy is a shovel operator at Keetac mines. He also coaches hockey and baseball teams, along with fishing and elk hunting. They love to travel and have been to Thailand, Iceland, BoraBora, Mexico, and Florida multiple times. Their oldest son, Benson, is 10 years old and loves to play baseball and is a hockey goalie. He also loves to fish and hunt. Maeve is 8 years old and is in competitive gymnastics and loves doing crafts. She recently took 4th place at state in December! Duke is 5 and looking forward to starting kindergarten next year. He loves playing hockey, T ball, and loves to fish.

They are one busy family! Welcome to GRUMC

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### Family Ministry Coordinator

Hello UMCGR Faith Family! I have been serving this congregation for the past 5 years as your Office Administrator. Beginning January 1st, I will be adding Family Ministry Coordinator to my role. I am looking forward to serving the children and young families of our grow faith community as well as continuing to support the activities of the other groups with administrative services. Blessings, Jodi



### Attn: Young Families!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 1st. We will have an organizational meeting following the service so I can get a feel of what you would like to see happen with this developing ministry. Bring your thoughts and ideas about Discovery Zone (Sunday School), Nursery, and Family & Children's activities.

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### News From the Office:

In January our new Database Amplify by Ministry Brands will be up and running. Watch for more details as to how this will effect you. We will still have access to Breeze (our previous database) for a few months.

Along with the new database, we are also working on an updated website, watch for that to launch in February. Then in early spring watch for information about our new church App!!

With the addition of the Children's & Family Ministries Coordinator duties, I will be working more hours. However, for now my office hours will remain Monday - Friday, 9am - 3pm. My work from hour hours will increase and there will be weekend & evening hours for events as well. I will also continue to work from home on Wednesdays to care for my mom. Blessings, Jodi






- 2 John Anderson
- 2 Margaret Cass
- 3 Sherry Thompson
- 3 Dana Grina
- 4 Kelsie Jo Zimmer
- 4 McKenzie Selliers
- 5 Carolyn Salo
- 6 Renee Veit
- 11 Virginia Rucinski
- 13 Joan Jones

- 15 Dave Hutchins
- 16 Virginia Loop
- 22 Laura Hauser
- 24 Lynne Meyer
- 26 Joann Gould
- 27 Bennett Hanson
- 28 Owen Linder
- 28 Irene Drieman
- 28 Sean Duffney
- 31 David Tank

5 John & JoLynn Linder



**Hospitality**  
MINISTRY

**Coordinator:**  
**Nancy O'Toole**

*The captain will contact you if there is a need for help serving a lunch, funeral or other event.*

Marie Duffy	Gloria Gooler
Deb Hagenbuck	June Johnson
Sue Kolka	Sally LaDoux
Becky Larson	Lisa Randall
Gene & Linda Rasmussen	Justine Williams



**Annual Charge  
Conference  
Sunday, January 25th  
following the service.**



**Update from Boy Scout Troop 404 I**

A very Merry Christmas!

Our troop meetings have been scattered between outings, planning for early winter activities and working on rank advancement. Some of our newer scouts have been finishing up requirements to advance in rank. Keeping those skills sharp and brushing up on others.

Our cabin camping excursion is coming up in early January at Lake Leander in Britt. We invite the Webelos scouts along and enjoy a day outside icefishing, snowshoeing, cooking and working on our winter camping skills.

Come February our troop is hosting the District Klondike Derby in Deer River. A klondike derby is a gold rush themed winter outdoor activity Scouting participates in. Troops from the area bring their klondike sleds to compete in outdoor activities, first aid, firebuilding, other skills and races for a day of fun.

In the scouting spirit of service to the community, our troop enjoyed caroling at Brookside manor for the residents along with the Cub Scouts.

We would like to welcome Xyler, a new scout that joined our troop last month.

All our scouts and leaders hope you enjoy a blessed Christmas season.

Sincerely, The Troop 41 Committee