

The Springs

Where The Thirsty Find Life

Happy New Year! I hope you've a wonderful Christmas and beginning to the new year, including catching up with family and friends, celebrating joyfully, sharing some holiday goodies, and maybe even enjoying a couple of days of downtime. I treasure all of the moments this Advent and Christmas we have shared together as a church family as well as time to rest and see my family. As we find ourselves waving goodbye to 2025 and welcoming in 2026, our inboxes are flooded with emails and articles about resolutions for the new year. It's a time of new beginnings and a season of fresh starts as we are still in the Christmas season leading up to Epiphany next Tuesday and celebrating in worship on Sunday. This Sunday we will focus on the light of the star of Bethlehem that guided the magi to Jesus, and each of us will receive a "star word" after we receive holy communion. It will be a small reminder to hopefully help you live in the light this new year and give each one of us a special prayer focus.

While I am grateful for the push that a new year gives us to challenge ourselves, to reflect in prayer, and to see where we are being led to grow and change, what I often find lacking is grace and honesty with ourselves and others. In social media posts and conversations, people say that this year they are going to be fitter, more organized, better with money, they're going eat better, work better, be better. There is an undeniable tone of people looking at themselves and thinking they can just will themselves into being closer to some ideal self they imagine. Underneath all of the hopes and aspirations is an assumption that you are at your current health status, financial status, or spiritual health because you just haven't tried hard enough—as if we don't work hard enough the other months of the year. What if this year we reframe the idea of New Year's resolutions to be about celebrating all that we already are, and continuing to move towards the things we want, instead of just focusing on where we believe we are falling short. When the ancient Israelites gathered, they routinely spent time going over the ways that God had been with them, the good things that happened, and the places where they had thrived, grown, and seen the goodness of God.

I wonder if before we write any resolutions for this year, we should start by looking over our past year for the things that are worth celebrating. Where has God been faithful? What good things have emerged? Where have we been in line with what the Spirit calls us to? What can we be proud of? What have we done in our work, our family, and ourselves that is worthy of a little celebration? I invite you to take a moment, create the list, and then share it with people who really love you, who will be able to respond to you with authentic joy for what you have accomplished. Give thanks to God for all of those things. And then, from that place, maybe take the moment and consider what you want to move towards in 2026. Maybe it's something that you've already been building some momentum toward in 2025. Know that as your pastor I would love to hear your celebrations and help you recognize that you have been a good and faithful servant, and remind you that you are a beloved child of God. And you will be this year, too, by God's grace. May this season of Christmas and Epiphany inspire, challenge, and comfort you. By God's grace, we are invited to live renewed and redeemed in the light of Christ each and every day.

Grace and peace,
Emily

New Prayer Requests

The Family of Adele Graham and
Hailey Partridge
Rev. Kathy Vaughns
Mark Adkins



January Birthdays

Jan. 1st Ashley Rue
Jan. 4th Amy Floyd
Jan. 16th Patti Coxwell
Jan. 19th John Fera
Jan. 29th Malaea Mendiola

Continue to pray for

Tammy Alford, Jim & Sylvia Autry, Otha
Barham, Ron & Carol Burton, James
Carson, Charlotte Cermack, Shirley
Dooley, Francois duPlessis, Ada Glass,
Rev. Johniel Henry, Betsy Littleton, Neal
Martin, Kristin Pratt, James E. Smith, Kristi
Taverner, Bobby Townsend, Carolyn Wall,
Jake Warren, Joe Don Yates

Volunteer Opportunities

Communion Servers:

January 4th: Suzanne, Carrol, Cathy, & Janet

Greeter:

January 4th: Malaea
January 11th: Margaret
January 18th: Ragen
January 25th: Cathy

Counters:

January 4th: Neldia & Robin
January 11th: Cathy & Jeffrey
January 18th: Kevin & Danny
January 25th: Neldia & Robin

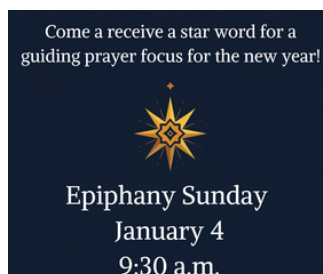


Sunday Snacks:

January 4th:
January 11th: No snacks
January 18th: Suzanne
January 25th:

Meals On Wheels:

January 5th: Margaret & Cathy
January 12th: Janet & Carrol
January 19th: No delivery
January 26th: Marjorie



Weekly Schedule

Sunday:

9:30 A.M. Worship
10:45 A.M. Sunday School

Wednesday:

5:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal
6:00 P.M. Children & Youth
6:00 P.M. Faith & Fitness

Upcoming Events

Sunday, January 11

"Finding Meaning and Visioning Purpose" with
Rev. Beth Miller

Monday, January 12th

1:00 p.m. Women of the Church

Tuesday, January 13th

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
6:00 p.m. Executive Team Meeting

Hospitality Opportunities:

January 11th we will share lunch
together following worship.

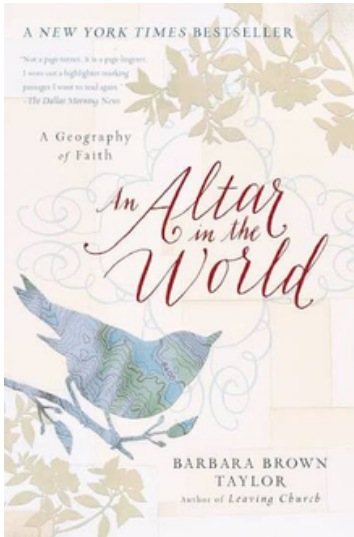
Take A Meal signups for the Vaughns
family are available.
See a member of the Hospitality team
for more information.

Newsletter deadline:

January 26th for February Newsletter



Poplar Springs Drive UMC					
Monthly Financial Report Summary					
as of November 30, 2025					
2025 Summary	10/31/2025		11/30/2025		11/30/2025
	Actual		Actual		Actual
	<u>Y-T-D</u>		<u>M-T-D</u>		<u>Y-T-D</u>
Budget Offering	\$187,193		\$12,039		\$199,232
Budget Expenses	\$195,726		\$21,846		\$217,572
Receipts Over (Under)	(\$8,533)		(\$9,807)		(\$18,340)



Join us for a new book study on Tuesdays at noon beginning Tuesday, January 13. This study will focus on the book, "An Altar in the World," by Barbara Brown Taylor. The author shows us how to discover altars everywhere we go and in nearly everything we do as we learn to live with purpose, pay attention, slow down, and revere the world we live in. We will meet on Tuesdays at noon from January 13- February 17.

If you would like Pastor Emily to order you a copy for \$9, please sign up and pay by Monday, January 5.

Grace and peace,
Emily



Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of Adele Williamson Graham, who passed away on November 26, 2025, and her daughter, Hailey Partridge, who left us on December 12, 2025. We kindly ask you to keep this family in your thoughts in the weeks ahead.



Thank you so much for your generous staff love offering. It was greatly appreciated.

Love, Stacey Little

Be Connected:

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children's Christmas Caroling
for our shut-ins.



Thank you

Thank you to Mrs. Betty Allison for all you do for our children and youth.

Mrs. Betty Allison exemplifies the true spirit of service. Through unwavering dedication, compassion, and reliability, she consistently goes above and beyond to support Children and Youth ministries. Whether stepping in where help is needed most or leading with a positive attitude, Mrs. Betty has made a lasting impact on our church. We are deeply grateful for her time, heart, and commitment, and are honored to recognize Mrs. Betty as our Volunteer of the Year.

Spontaneous Nativity



Welcome to our new members:
Bill and Betty Allison



Day School News

The Day School is having a very exciting and magical holiday season!!

In December, we had elves on shelves in each classroom! We had special guests who made ornaments with us, read Christmas stories to us, and talked to us about the nativity and Baby Jesus. Each class also had a Christmas party and gift swap!

When we get back from our break, we will be celebrating the new year, and our big kids will be attending the play 'Frozen' at Meridian Little Theater! ❄️🎭

We will be closed January 19th for Martin Luther King Day

A letter to us from

Rev. Beth Miller

A word about our afternoon time together the three words joined by a conjunction sound almost ethereal ...;finding meaning and purpose.” I trust that I am not over-assuming to offer that we all - at some point in our life journey - ponder those words ... finding meaning and purpose. I confess I have — sometimes, many times over!

Now, we may not say it those exact words, or maybe not even anything close to that, but perhaps we do wonder just exactly what it is that we’re going to do with ourselves. Further, I would offer that we who live our lives in the Christian faith, and particularly in our faith tradition of the United Methodist Church, and more pointedly, in Poplar Springs Drive United Methodist Church, search to find that place where; the star had stopped they were overwhelmed by joy.

That’s the Epiphany story as told in the Gospel of Matthew. In an afternoon time of Finding Meaning and Purpose in the Practices of Life — particularly embedded in the Season of Epiphany, we shall explore together those words for ourselves, and especially for the ministries of Poplar Springs UMC beginning in 2026. Our time together will be resourced primarily from the book, A Geography of Faith An Altar in the World, written by Barbara Brown Taylor. We will talk together, sing and pray together, imagine together, and explore visions together. I am so gratefully excited to be invited to be with your gifted pastor, Rev. Emily Sanford, and with you all, the Congregation of Poplar Springs Drive United Methodist Church.

Until Sunday, January 11, 2026 Peace and blessings

Rev. Elizabeth (Beth) Miller

Director of MS Course of Study School and License to Preach School

STAFF

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Mark Adkins
Maintenance

To:

Lectionary Readings

Week of January 4

Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13-17

Week of January 11

Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-42

Week of January 18

Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-23

Week of January 25

Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12

Mailing Address:

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