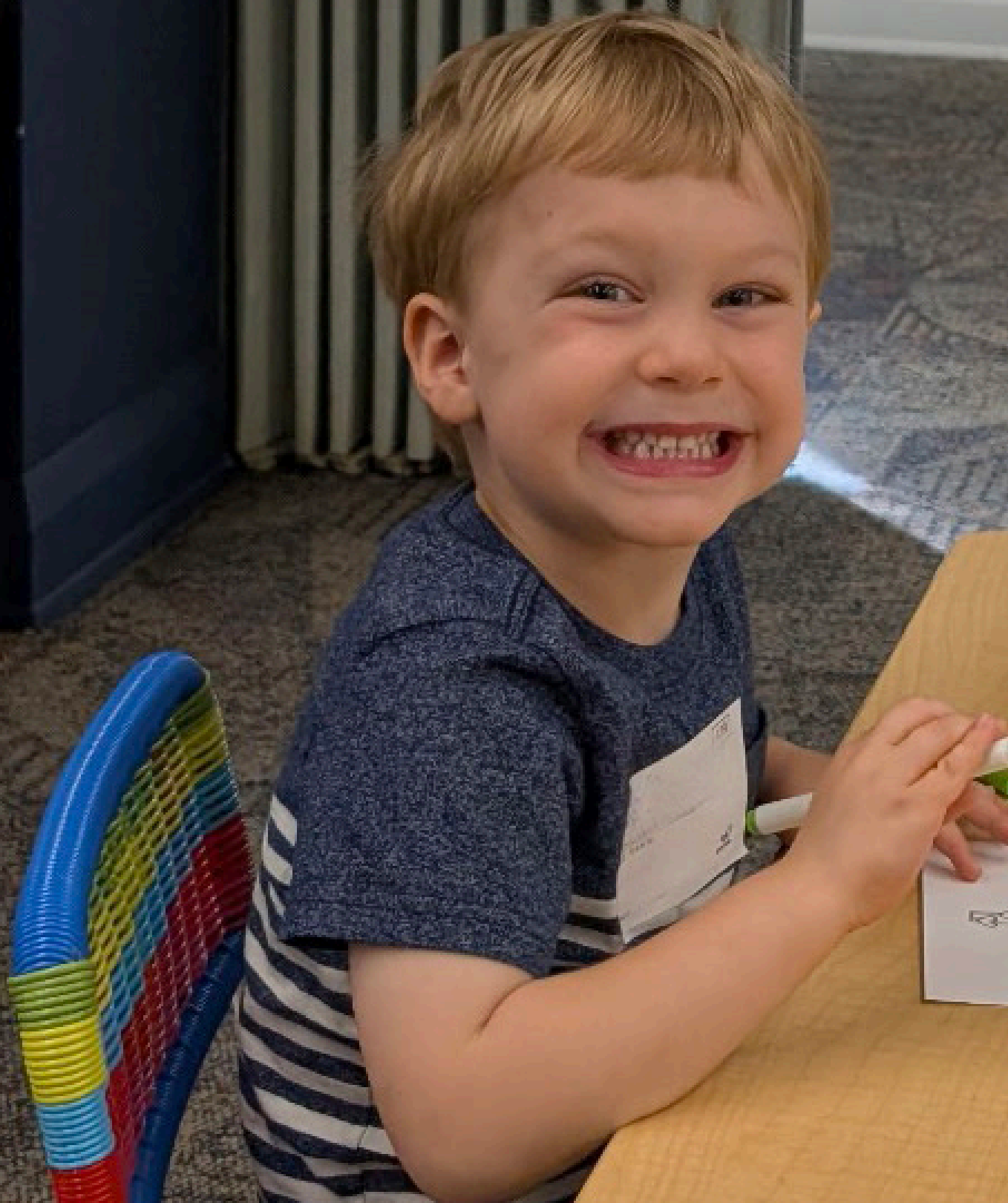


Chimes

The Magazine of Gary United Methodist Church
January/February 2026



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Chimes VOLUME LXXIV, ISSUE I

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Sunday Worship

9 a.m. & 11:11 a.m.

In person
Livestream and recording
later in the day at garychurch.org
Nursery available

Church Office Hours

Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
630–668–3100
office@garychurch.org



*At Gary Church, our mission
through Christ is to grow
in joyful faith and serve all
in love.*

On our cover

One of our Gary Kids
is all smiles while
creating a fun project in our
morning Sunday School.

Submissions for the March/April *Chimes* magazine are due by noon on Monday, Jan. 5. Announcements for the Sunday bulletin and weekly e-news are due each Monday 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 at garychurch.org.

As much as Things Change...

*Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you,
“Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.”*

Deuteronomy 15:11

It's just about that time again. The year 2025 with all its joys and sorrows will soon be behind us and the year 2026 with all its promise and predictions will soon begin. People around the

**God calls
people of
faith to
be good
stewards
of the earth**

world have been caught up in the rituals surrounding this annual transition. Journalists have been reviewing the news of 2025; creating “year in review” montages as a global reflection on how much can happen in a single year. Economists, sociologists, technologists, and fashion trend forecasters have been creating predictions about the new trends for 2026; drawing us forward into a new future. Pyrotechnicians have been planning elaborate celebrations for major cities around the globe.

The changing of the year feels momentous. However, if we listen to Jesus speaking to his disciples in Matthew 26:6-13, we gain a different perspective. They were eating together at the house of someone called, “Simon the leper” when a woman entered the dining room and anointed Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume. Some of the disciples were angered by this, because they could have sold the perfume and helped the poor. Jesus supported the woman, saying, “Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.”

It may sound like Jesus is only siding with the woman. I’ve even heard people suggest that Jesus was saying that helping the poor isn’t very important because we’ll never solve the problem anyway. However, I believe that Jesus was actually supporting a both/and approach to our worship and work as people of faith.

There are times that call for extravagant acts of worship. Some things, like the last days of Jesus’ life, actually are momentous. Expensive perfume is appropriate for those days.

We also need to remember that when Jesus told the disciples that the poor would always be with them, he was likely referring back to the passage from Deuteronomy 15:11 that observes that there will always be people in need on the earth, and God always expects people of faith to do something about that. Expensive perfume is important for the extraordinary moments, and the work of empowering and providing for those in need is appropriate in every moment.

A few things will change on January 1, 2026, but most of our worship and work as Christians will not. The year ticking over to a new number provides a reminder to plan for our ordinary work that needs to keep going and growing. Across the scriptures God calls people of faith to be good stewards of the earth, loving to all of our neighbors, faithful worshippers, workers for justice, extenders of care and empowerment to those in need, and much more. These expectations don’t change with the seasons or the year. The needs and expectations will always be with us. They are a part of our faith-work.

As the new year begins,
take a few moments to
prayerfully consider God’s
everyday expectations.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mary



Love
Courageously
1 Corinthians 16:14

ADULT Christian Education and Discipleship

Sunday morning series

Love in Mission

Sundays, Jan. 11, 18, 25, 10:10 a.m., Anderson Room

Join us in adult Christian education as we explore three missions supported by Gary Church and discover how each one is demonstrating courageous love to our neighbors.



People's Resource Center



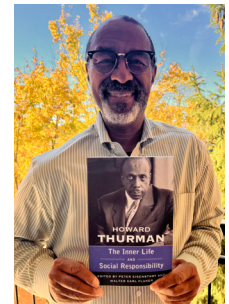
- **Jan. 11:** Clara Freitas and **John-Marc Bilezikian** will share the latest about the People's Resource Center and answer your questions.
- **Jan. 18:** We will learn more about Educate a Girl / Change the World and hear from Kenneth Elisapana, executive director of South Sudan Voices of Hope.
- **Jan. 25:** Mindy Inman, director of volunteer services, and Alvin Marquez, executive director, will present information about Outreach's efforts for the community and how you can get involved.



Social Responsibility

Sundays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 10:10 a.m., led by Rev. Dwight Stewart

The Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was one of the leading religious thinkers of 20th century America and was a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We will explore some of Thurman's thoughts and the implications for us today, based on the book, "The Inner Life and Social Responsibility." No reading required.



Lenten Studies

See page 7 for educational opportunities in Lent.

Winter Women's Retreat

Friday, Jan. 30, 5 p.m.-Saturday, Jan. 31, 4 p.m. at La Salle Manor Retreat Center, Plano, IL

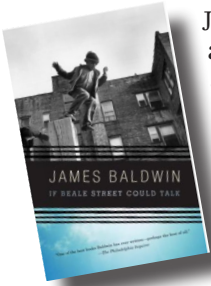
Gather for connection, reflection and conversation in a cozy lodge that is perfect for winter. Cost is \$175 per person.

Register at garychurch.org

Weekday studies

Anti-Racist Book Club: *If Beale Street Could Talk*

Wed., Jan 22, 7 p.m., Commons

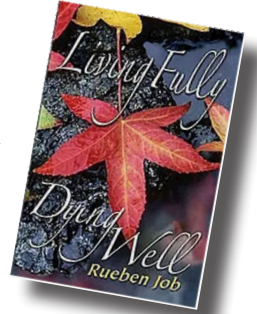


James Baldwin writes a love story about a young Black woman whose life is torn apart when her lover is wrongly accused of a crime—"a moving, painful story, so vividly human and so obviously based on reality that it strikes us as timeless" (The New York Times Book Review). Read the book on your own and register for the discussion at garychurch.org.

Living Fully, Dying Well

Thursdays starting Feb. 19, 2-3:30 p.m. or 7-8:30 p.m., depending on interest led by Rev. Fred Kelsey

Our best decisions about life's most important events are seldom made in a time of crisis. Living Fully, Dying Well is a class designed to assist us in making careful, wise and prayerful preparation for meeting life's most important moments. Register at garychurch.org.



Devotional Study Group

Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Commons A, led by Allen Reed

Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m., Anderson Room, led by Steve Novy

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays, 2 p.m., Anderson Room, led by Holly Trueblood

For more information about these studies, contact the leaders through the Church Office.



creative
arts ministry

Creative Writing

Saturday, Jan. 10, 10 a.m., Youth Rooms, led by Pam Connor

Creative writing can be a tool to unleash emotions, ideas and memories. In this session, we will use a variety of poetic prompts to explore ways of creative expression. Journals and pens will be provided. If time allows, watercolor paints and brushes will be available with special watercolor greeting cards for those who wish to illustrate their writing. Come with an open mind. Register at garychurch.org. Suggested donation: \$10.



Fellowship Opportunities

Walkers & Talkers Fellowship

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m., Commons

Stop in and chat with this welcoming fellowship group.

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.

Fourth Friday Breakfast

Fourth Friday of the month, 8:30 a.m.
Seven Dwarfs Restaurant, 917 E. Roosevelt Rd. Wheaton. Join **Dan** and **Sandy Fridley** for food and fellowship. Register at garychurch.org to reserve your place at the table.



United Women in Faith

(formerly United Methodist Women)

United Women in Faith Circles are small groups that develop supportive fellowship and expand concepts of mission. All women are invited to participate. Contact the Church Office and we'll put you in touch with the circle leader for more information on meeting dates and times.

Joy Circle

Knitting/Stitching Circle

Mary Martha Circle

Susanna Wesley Circle



United
Women
in Faith

Men's pickleball

Mondays, 7 p.m.
Activity Center

Let's get together for some fellowship, laughs and a little bit of exercise. We'll set up courts in the gym and rotate through positions. No experience necessary. Bring your own pickleball racquet and ball. Register and sign the waiver at garychurch.org. Contact **Mark Mathis** through the Church Office for more information.



Semimonthly men's breakfast

Second and third Saturdays of the month
7:30 a.m., Egg'lectic Cafe, 145 N. Hale Street
Wheaton

All Gary Church men are invited to join. Register at garychurch.org to reserve a place at the table.



Young Adult Pastor's Lunch

Sundays, Jan. 25 and Feb. 22, 12:15 p.m., meet at Door 5

Each month, our "post-High School/ college/ early on in adulthood/ probably in your 20s or 30s" adults are invited to join **Dan Lee** for lunch and fellowship. Our treat! RSVP to dlee@garychurch.org or just come!

Class Meeting

each group decides best day/time

Looking for friendship? Belonging? A closer relationship with Jesus? You could find all that and more at the Class Meeting. Class Meeting is a small group that laughs, prays and encourages each other in Christ. For more information, contact **Carey Williams Bebar**, cbebar@garychurch.org.

Lent 2026

Ash Wednesday



Feb. 18

7-8 a.m. Ashes to Go, College Avenue Train Station

9-10 a.m. Ashes to Go, Gary Church Parking Lot

5:30 p.m. Family Worship and Activity, Commons

7 p.m. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary

See back page for details.

ADULT

Christian Education and Discipleship

Sunday

Lenten Study

Starting Feb. 22

Join us for a thoughtful Lenten journey designed for adult learners seeking meaningful reflection during this sacred season. Stay tuned for more details in the weekly e-news.

Wednesday

Lenten Study

Starting Feb. 25, led by Pastor Mary Zajac

A midweek study to bring you closer to God. Child care will be provided. Stay tuned for more details in the weekly e-news.

Forty Lenten devotions needed

We're looking for contributors for our Lenten Devotional. It's a beautiful compilation of personal stories of God at work, sent to your email throughout Lent. Take a photo. Write a poem. Draw a picture. Maybe a recent reflection or Scripture passage has touched you. Or maybe our theme for the year, "Love Courageously" has moved you.

We invite all children, youth and adults to share reflections, personal stories and glimpses of God at work in our lives. You're welcome to follow this format: title, Scripture, reflection, prayer, action. Email your devotion before Thursday, Jan. 15 to **Janet Mathis**, jmathis@garychurch.org.

A MUSICAL LENTEN ANTICIPATION

GRIEF & GLORY

Enjoy M. Roger Holland's
Tribulation Suite and
Donté Ford's *Three Gospelized Spirituals*
(choral-orchestral world premiere)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

9 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton

715 N. Carlton Ave.

firstpreswheaton.org

11:11 a.m.

Gary United Methodist Church

224 N. Main St.

garychurch.org

Kiena Williams, *Soloist*

Donté Ford, *Minister of Music and Worship,*
First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton

Joshua Velez, *Director of Music,*
Gary United Methodist Church

Festival Choirs and Chamber Orchestras of



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
of Wheaton



GARY
United Methodist
CHURCH

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Church Conference update



At our 2025 Church Conference meeting, we voted unanimously to affirm **Carey Williams Bebar** as a candidate for ordination as an elder in The United Methodist Church. We prayed for her as she continues her journey in school at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. She expects to graduate in 2028.

Church Conference (also known as Charge Conference) is an annual meeting where we vote on the budget, approve nominations for committees and connect with the district superintendent of the Northern Illinois Conference. This year, we heard a message from Bishop Dan Schwerin, asking us to consider our focus for the year to be “practicing hope.”

Our next Church Conference will most likely be in November 2026. All are welcome to attend, and Gary Church members are invited to vote.



Sing in the Festival Choir

All voices are welcome to sing in the Festival Choir, *Grief and Glory: A Musical Lenten Anticipation*, on Sunday, Feb. 15.

Below is the rehearsal schedule:

Thursdays, Jan. 8-29, 8-9:30 p.m., Gary Church

Thursdays, Feb. 5-12, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Gary Church

Saturday, Feb. 14, 9 a.m.-noon, First Presbyterian Church

Workshops will also be available in the Choir Room on Saturdays, Jan. 24- Feb. 7, 2-3 p.m. Contact **Joshua Velez**, jvelez@garychurch.org, to let him know you'd love to sing.

11:11 a.m. music playlist

Check out the playlist of songs we sing in worship at 11:11 a.m. Find the links to YouTube and Spotify at garychurch.org/ministries/music.

Music Ministry Suggestion Box

Provide your ideas, feedback or requests for a favorite hymn, worship song or piece of music. Share your thoughts at garychurch.org/ministries/music.

Things to know on a Sunday

Wear nametags

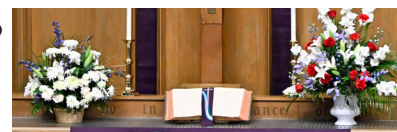
It's so helpful to put a name to a face. Any time you're at church, please feel free to open the nametag cabinet and wear your nametag. If you don't have one, contact the Church Office. You can find temporary nametags near the nametag cabinet.

Leave Parking Lot open

If you're able, please consider parking on the street, at Clare Woods Academy or Hultgren's Funeral Home on Sundays. This will help create open spots in the Church Parking Lot for visitors and those who need a space close to church.

Give flowers for the altar

Many Sundays are available in 2026 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.



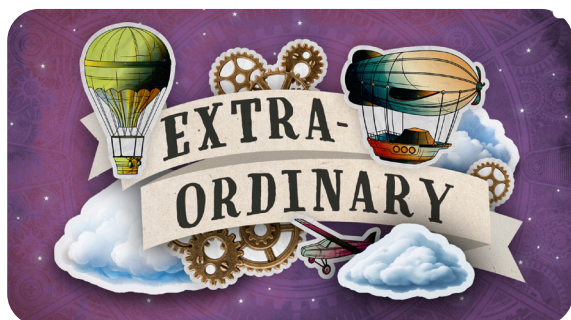
Hey Parents!

As we step into a fresh new year, we're excited to partner with you in ministry – because just like New Year's resolutions, it's the perfect time to grow, reset and discover new ways God is working in the lives of our kids. Blessings and see you Sunday!

what we're teaching

January Series: **EXTRA-ORDINARY**

Inventors take ordinary objects and transform them into extraordinary innovations with some creativity and a lot of tinkering. But Jesus didn't need tools, blueprints or a workshop to make extraordinary things happen. On the outside, Jesus may have seemed ordinary, but his life, actions and love regularly defied expectations. He transformed ordinary people and situations, showing us what an extraordinary God can do. Kids will learn that **Jesus is one of a kind, Jesus is humble, Jesus trusted God, and Jesus calls us to follow.**



February Series: **TRAILBLAZER**

Jesus was a true trailblazer – not just for his time, but for all time! Jesus' teachings and way of life often went against the grain of what people expected, showing us a whole new way to live and love. While blazing new trails, Jesus never wavered from the path of following God, and he paved the way for us to follow his lead. Kids will learn to **trust Jesus even when it's not easy, show others the way to God, let God's love take the lead, and pray the way Jesus prayed.**



what's happening

Parent's Night Out

Fridays, Jan. 9 & Feb. 13, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Drop off your kiddos at Gary Church and enjoy some well-deserved time away. Each month features a movie, craft and free-play for kids ages preschool 3s through fifth grade. Suggested cash donation of \$5 per child. Register at garychurch.org.



Roller Skating

*Friday, Jan. 23, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Funway in Batavia*

Fourth and fifth grade students are invited to a fun night of skating with friends. Admission cost \$8, with an additional \$3 for skate rentals. Carpooling is encouraged! RSVP to **Carey Williams Bebar** at cbebar@garychurch.org.



Musical

Fired Up

*Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m. show
5 p.m. dinner*

All Gary Youth and Gary Kids are invited to take part in this year's musical! For more information see page 11.



Camp Gary

Friday, Feb. 27 and Monday, March 30
9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Looking for something fun for your kids to do on their day off from school? Kids will spend the morning playing, crafting, snacking, and hanging out with friends. And if you need it, you'll have access to a quiet workspace stocked with coffee and donuts.

Registration is open for preschool 3s through fifth grade at garychurch.org, but space is limited — so don't wait!

We're also looking for volunteers (psst...high schoolers, this is an easy way to earn service hours!). Sign up at garychurch.org.



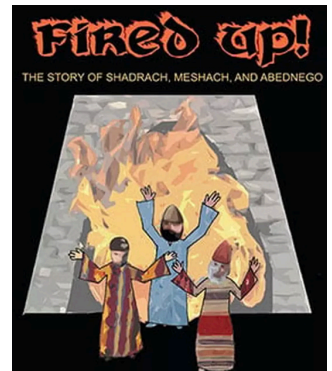
Fired Up Musical

Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m.

All Gary Youth and Gary Kids are invited to take part in this year's musical! *Fired Up* is a lighthearted re-telling of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that includes well-crafted accessible songs, clever humor and a solid biblical message, in this case: we follow a loving God worthy of trust!

- **Rehearsals:** Sundays, 4-6 p.m. starting Jan. 4
🔥 Not all cast members will be called each week or for the duration of the time. A detailed schedule will come from the directors closer to the rehearsal dates.
- **Dress Rehearsal:** Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m.
- **Musical & Chili Cookoff:** Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m. show, 5 p.m. dinner

Interested but have limited availability or want more details? Contact **Carey Williams Bebar** at cbebar@garychurch.org.



Chili Cookoff and Auction

Sunday, March 15, 5-6:30 p.m.

You are invited to a night of fun, fellowship and good-natured competition. Enjoy Gary's Musical *Fired Up*, eat dinner and make bids at the auction. The menu will include a variety of chili and soup, and we will provide small bowls so you can try as many as you would like. As you eat, vote for your favorite chili or soup, and bid on all sorts of services and items.

The chili and soup that wins the most votes takes home the Golden Ladle Trophy! If you would like to enter the competition and/or if you have an item or service to donate to the auction, visit garychurch.org/registrations by Wednesday, March 4. All donations will be used to help fund our high school mission trip in June.



Questions about the cookoff and auction? Contact **Dan Lee** at dlee@garychurch.org.





Gary Youth

Weekly Gathering

Middle School

Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m., Youth Rooms
(No meetings on Feb. 11, Feb. 18.)

High School

Sundays, 6-7:30 p.m., Youth Rooms
(No meetings on Jan. 4, Feb. 15.)

Sunday School

10-11 a.m., Middle School and High School Rooms
(No Sunday School classes on Jan. 4, Feb. 15.)



Stay connected

Visit garychurch.org and navigate to our youth page, receive weekly Gary Youth emails, plus follow us on Instagram (gary_youth) and Facebook (Gary Youth).

Let us know

We want to celebrate your gifts! Visit the Gary Youth page at garychurch.org and let us know about your special event. We will do our best to attend to cheer you on!

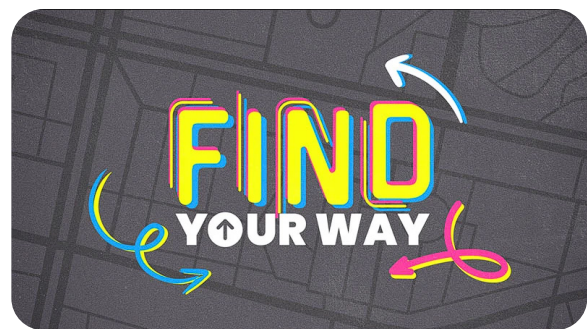


What are we learning in January?



We've all wondered who we are, what makes us unique, and how we're supposed to make a difference in the world. God created each of us with a purpose to do amazing things. In this series, we'll see that the things you love might be exactly how God works through you. You're made to be a light, to lead and to make a difference.

What are we learning in February?



Life can feel confusing. We hit moments where we're not sure which way to go, what decision to make or how to figure things out. The Bible is more than an old book — it's a map that helps us find our way. In this series, we'll discover how the Bible helps us see things differently, shows us how to be like Jesus, reveals what God is like and teaches us what is true.

Summer Mission Presentation

Sunday, Jan. 11, 6-7:30 p.m., current grades 8-12

Mission trips are a great way to follow Jesus into the world as we learn about other cultures, engage with justice work with our hands and practice our leadership skills. Not to mention, serving others brings us joy. Parents, youth and interested adults are invited to hear about our 2026 summer mission trip.

Gary Youth Supports Educate a Girl

Middle School: *Wednesday, Jan. 14, 7-8:30 p.m.*

High School: *Sunday, Jan. 18, 6-7:30 p.m.*

Gary Church provides scholarships to young women and girls around the world, enabling them to attend primary, secondary school and college. Middle schoolers will be preparing items to sell at the EAG bake sale. High schoolers are invited to bake goods for the bake sale auction on *Sunday, Jan. 18*. Contact **Dan Lee**, dlee@garychurch.org, to let him know you can bake something delicious to donate.

Gary Youth Movie Night

Wednesday, Jan. 21, 7-8:30 p.m.

Middle schoolers are invited to bring a lawn chair, blanket and favorite snack for our fun night in January. We will watch a movie in the Activity Center on a big screen. Popcorn and drinks will be provided. The movie will be decided closer to the date. Don't forget to bring a friend!

Study Hall & Smoothie Night

Sunday, Jan. 25, 6-7:30 p.m.

High schoolers, we understand that it is hard to come to youth group when you have homework and studying to do. Then, do it at youth group! Invite your friends, do your homework, study, enjoy a variety of snacks and **Dan Lee** will make you a delicious smoothie. Let us know what your snacks of choice are, favorite smoothie flavor and RSVP on our youth page at garychurch.org.

Lunar New Year Party

Middle School: *Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7-8:30 p.m.*

High School: *Sunday, Feb. 8, 6-7:30 p.m.*

Gary Youth are invited to ring in the New Year with joy, fellowship and gratitude. We will play traditional Korean games and share delicious food as we share the meaningful traditions that **Dan Lee** experienced growing up in Korea.

Word & Table

Sundays, Jan. 18 and Feb. 22, 6-7:30 p.m.

Once a month, high schoolers meet at someone's home for dinner, games and discussion. An RSVP link and addresses will be sent out closer to the date.

Winter Chill

Saturday, Feb. 13–Monday, Feb. 15

Winter Chill is here! Gary Youth (middle and high school) will take some time away for a weekend of worship and fellowship. Enjoy some relaxation and rejuvenation, connecting with nature, God and each other! This year, our theme is Courageous Love.



Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Violet Johnicker, an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church. She serves as executive director of Rockford Urban Ministries, an interfaith social justice advocacy nonprofit, and has also been appointed this year to plant a new United Methodist faith community in Rockford. She studied divinity and public policy in grad school and believes that the call to love our neighbors means building love into our systems so that everyone can be part of the beloved community. Violet has a 3-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son, and they all love playing outside.



Chili Cook Off and Auction

Sunday, March 15, Musical: 4-5 p.m.; Chili Cook Off and Auction: 5-6:30 p.m.

You are invited to a night of fun, fellowship and lighthearted re-telling of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! Enjoy the Fired Up musical, eat dinner and make bids at the auction. Vote for your favorite chili, and bid on services and items. Use the QR code provided to register by *Sunday, March 1*. If you have any questions, please contact the Church Office or **Dan Lee** at dlee@garychurch.org. See page 11 for more information.





GARY CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Thank you for helping Educate a Girl / Change the World reach its sixth year! Your generous support of the EAG mission impacts real people by helping secure a path to independence for many young women around the world.

Please help us achieve these program goals for the coming year:

- Raise \$10,000 by Feb. 28 to provide scholarships to 14-18 girls (for previous recipients and new students.)
- Continue various types of scholarships, including support for tuition, uniforms, supplies and books.
- Invest in the future of girls and young women in Cambodia, Kenya and Zimbabwe as well as in the Chicago area.

Here's how you can support Educate a Girl:

- **Donate** to the mission through the Church Office or at garychurch.org.
- **Attend** the adult education class on *Sunday, Jan. 18 at 10:10 a.m.*
- **Bake** and/or buy goodies through the EAG Bake Sale on *Sunday, Jan. 25.*
 - Drop off baked goods *Saturday, Jan. 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or Sunday, Jan. 25 at 8 a.m.*
 - Bid on delicious desserts (including **Wendy Anastasia's** Famous Carrot Cake) through our Silent Auction.
- **Encourage** your children to participate in EAG activities through Gary Kids Helping Hands and Gary Youth.

Thank you, Gary Church, for supporting EAG with your generous one-time donations and monthly giving. You are truly helping to lift up young women who deeply understand that education is the path to a much better life for themselves, their families and their communities.

Judy Selby & Cathy Mousseau

2025 Graduates



Nisa



Tiara



Aaliyah

Nisa (Cambodia) completed high school and will move to college studying psychiatry after passing entry tests in January.

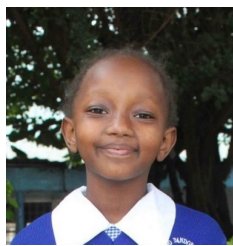
Tiara (Nashville) graduated from Meharry Medical College and is now in her medical residency.

Aaliyah (Chicago) graduated from Columbia College in December. We expect to support a new Native American student for 2026.

More Student Updates



Angel



Joy



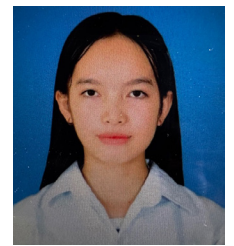
Esther



Lona



Tainara



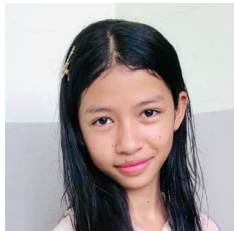
Meth



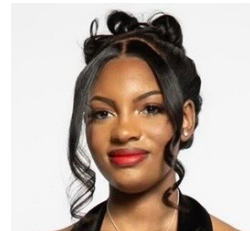
Voeun



Neang



Sarah



Morgan



Ashanti



Jazariah

Kenya

Angel and **Joy** have started second and seventh grade, respectively, at their Kinyago Dandora School.

South Sudan

Esther (Uganda) and **Lona** (South Sudan) are doing well in their high schools.

Africa University (Zimbabwe)

Tainara (Mozambique) has begun her second year at Africa University.

Cambodia

Meth (eighth grade), **Voeun** (ninth grade), **Neang** and **Sarah** (tenth grade) have successfully completed end of year testing. They began their new grade level in November. We look forward to supporting a new Cambodian student in 2026.

Chicago “MyBlockMyHoodMyCity” Students

Morgan is continuing her veterinary studies at Michigan State.

Ashanti is working full-time while staying on track to graduate from National Louis University in **Spring 2027**.

Jazariah switched to a business focus at one of the city colleges and is planning to get certified as a medical assistant.

GARY CHURCH *makes a difference*

Missions will be kicking off the new year with three adult education classes featuring the People's Resource Center, Educate a Girl / Change the World, South Sudan Voices of Hope and Outreach. See page 4 for more information.

Justice For Our Neighbors fundraising dinner

Thank you to the 28 Gary Church members who attended the Justice For Our Neighbors annual fundraising dinner, where our church was recognized among the major 2025 supporters. Pastor Chris Pierson was recognized for his role in organizing Northern Illinois Justice For Our Neighbors 14 years ago, as well as his continued support and involvement for immigration justice. Chris is the current president of the Immigration Law and Justice Network at the national level. At the event, we heard the announcement of NIJFON's name change to Immigration Law and Justice for Northern Illinois, better representing their relationship with the national Immigration Law and Justice Network. If you'd like to contribute to their work in Illinois or at the national level, go to garychurch.org/give.

Joe Ruth
Missions Chairperson



Thanks to Susanna Wesley Circle

and everyone who donated items and money for the birthday bags to give to the People's Resource Center. They delivered more than 70 bags with cake mix, frosting, candles, etc.



"Red Card" available

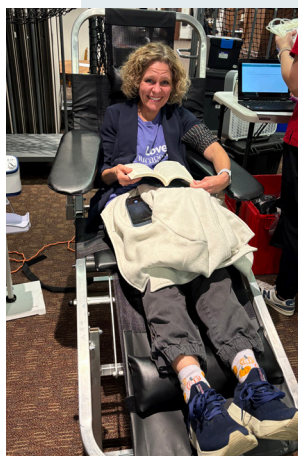
The Immigrant Legal Resource Center has designed a red card that lists constitutional rights. If you or someone you know would like one, stop in the Church Office.

Give blood in February

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2-6 p.m.
Activity Center or Commons

Sign up to be a hero to as many as three people! The need is constant, and every pint is precious. Register at garychurch.org. Walk-ins also welcome. In 2025, our blood drives collected enough units to save as many as 171 lives!

Mark your calendar for these blood drives in 2026: May 6, Aug. 19 and Nov. 18.



2026 Styrofoam recycling dates

Sundays, Jan. 11, April 19, July 19 and Oct. 18
8:45-10:30 a.m., South Driveway.

Can you help one time or more for collection or driving duties? If so, please contact **Elaine McCluskey** through the Church Office. If you miss the dates, feel free to drop off Styrofoam at Dart Container Corporation, 310 Evergreen Dr., North Aurora.



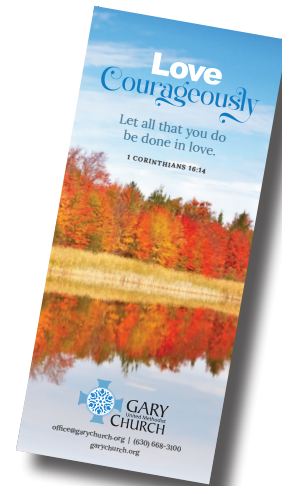


Thank you for your faithful giving this past year. This issue of *Chimes* is mailed before the close of the books for 2025, so we are not able to include a year-end summary. However, please know every dollar received has been a blessing to the mission and ministry of Gary Church as we continue to grow in joyful faith and serve all in love.

2026 Stewardship Campaign: Love Courageously

Thank you to all who have already returned their stewardship cards or online forms for 2026. We appreciate your commitment to “Love Courageously” and to share your spiritual and financial gifts with and through Gary Church.

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 on garychurch.org to complete the “Stewardship Campaign: Love Courageously” form as well as the “Get Connected” form.



Gary Church named historic place

The City of Wheaton Historic Commission has approved Gary United Methodist Church's application to be named in the Wheaton Register of Historic Places. This means Gary Church will be listed on the city's website and be part of Wheaton's Preservation Week Walk in May.

Heritage Room updates

If you haven't checked out the newly renovated Ralph L. Wheaton III Heritage Room yet, please do! The Heritage Room is on the Upper Level, next to the elevator, that now houses a cabinet with church artifacts (pictured here).

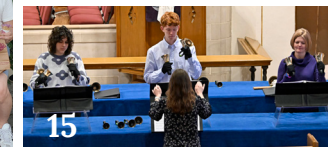
Thanks to church historians **Bobbi Wheatley** and **Laurie Warfel** for filling the cabinet with history. And, thank you to the Trustees for removing cabinets and shelves to allow for more space for meetings.



Guess what?

WOW! 2025 at Gary was packed with great times and shared memories. You will most likely agree that Gary Church has something for everybody. In this issue of *Chimes* you will see only a taste of what goes on at Gary throughout the year. During our many activities and events like missions, fellowship, special worship and weekly studies, you may be surprised to learn that many photographers are carefully planning to capture Gary's best moments - both posed and candid.

Below you'll see some special memories from 2025. We hope you will have fun remembering. Oh and, take a guess at what event these pics came from. The answers appear at the bottom. No Cheating!



25. Popsicles in the Courtyard 26. Creative Arts Pottery
21. Fall Youth Retreat 22. Gary Kids Helping Hands 23. Trunk or Treat 24. Feed My Starving Children
17. Creative Arts Acrylic Painting 18. Worship in the Park 19. Family Music Night 20. Habitat for Humanity
13. Creative Arts Gallery 14. Youth Mission Trip 15. Glory Ringers 16. 4th/5th Grade Fellowship
7. Plants with a Purpose 8. VBS 9. BLAST Camp 10. Family Camp 11. Collective Joy 12. PRIDE Picnic
1. Mini Golf Mayhem 2. Women's Retreat 3. Gary's Got Talent 4. SuperStart 5. One Earth Film Fest 6. Rome Trip

December birthdays*

We are so sorry we missed these December birthdays. Let's celebrate all year long.

Happy (90+) birthday to:

**Lorrie Brand
Sally Bintz
Barbara Garlinger**

Thank you

Outreach thanks you

Thanks so much to all of you who made possible the Christmas luncheon for the Older Adults Program at Outreach. For many of these seniors, the holidays are a lonely and sad time of the year, and this Christmas luncheon is their only holiday activity. One lady put it best by saying that this is the one event of the year she hopes to never miss. Thank you for helping them have a Merry Christmas.

Barbara Holmes and Holly Trueblood

Thanks to Gary Church for the awesome care package! It had everything I needed, and was such a fun surprise! The penguin is so cute. Thanks again,

Audrey Calderwood

Just received a (college care) package from Gary Church. Very much needed and I appreciate it so much. Please tell everyone thank you from me. It made me cry I was so happy to hear from them. Virtual hugs.

Lauren Updegrove

Thank you to everyone who submitted photos and articles for Gary Church communications this past year. I'd like to especially thank the following people who go above and beyond to share the good news of Gary Church: Jennifer Castino, Deb Evans, Deb Hafner, Barbara Holmes, Pam Keller, Cheryll Kelly, Becky Lemna, Greg Perisho, Allen Reed, Richelle Villanueva and Dan Wible.

Thank you!
Janet Mathis

To our church family,
We want to say a heartfelt thank you to all who expressed their love and support during our recent loss. You are truly an example of God's promise for everlasting arms!

Sincerely,
The Verne Bintz Family

Dear Gary Church members,
Thank you to all for the very beautiful handmade card sent to me for my 94th birthday. So many names and so many lovely memories.

Bless you all!
Jan Allen

Our sympathy

Sally Bintz, and their children and spouses on the death of their husband and father, Verne Bintz, on Oct. 29.

John, Jen, Colton and Adriana Hart on the death of Jen's mother, Lois Purdy, on Oct. 28.

Nick Evans on the death of his grandmother, Barbara Walters, on Nov. 11.

David and Kristi Hainline on the death of Kristi's father, Jasper Spears, on Nov. 15.

Jerry and Barbara Yamamoto on the death of Jerry's mother, Agnes, on Nov. 26.

The family of Ed Ewoldt. Ed died on Dec. 14.

Baptism

Sam and Will Matuch, sons of Joe and Rachel Matuch, on Nov. 9.

Congratulations

Scott and Betsy Boyd on the birth of their granddaughter, Madeline Amanda Long, on Dec. 11.

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

Ash Wednesday

Feb. 18

7-8 *a.m.* Ashes to Go, College Avenue Train Station

9-10 *a.m.* Ashes to Go, Gary Church Parking Lot

5:30 *p.m.* Family Worship and Activity, Commons

7 *p.m.* Traditional Worship, Sanctuary

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a 40-day season of prayer and repentance that prepares us for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

At 5:30 *p.m.*, families with young children are invited to a hands-on experience that explores the meaning of Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season, followed by the opportunity to receive ashes.

