

Chimes

The Magazine of Gary United Methodist Church
July/August 2026



Staff

Rev. Jonathan Crail

SENIOR PASTOR
jcraill@garychurch.org

Rev. Dr. Daniel Cochran

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
dcochran@garychurch.org

Carey Williams Bebar

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR
cbebar@garychurch.org

Daniel Lee

YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR
dlee@garychurch.org

Joshua Velez

MUSIC DIRECTOR
jvelez@garychurch.org

Pam Connor

PIANIST
pconnor@garychurch.org

Deb Evans

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
devans@garychurch.org

Deb Hafner

CHURCH OFFICE
office@garychurch.org

Jennifer Castino

WELCOME MINISTRIES COORDINATOR AND
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
jcastino@garychurch.org

Janet Mathis

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
jmathis@garychurch.org

Pam Keller

PRINT COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
pkeller@garychurch.org

Becky Lemna

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
blemna@garychurch.org

Mike & Donna Capra

CAPRA JANITORIAL

Chimes VOLUME LXXIV, ISSUE IV

Summer
Worship
9 a.m.

Kids' Church, plus 10 a.m.
Special Blend fellowship.
Nursery care will be available
throughout the morning.

Later this summer

Starting Sept. 13 we will worship
together at 9 a.m. & 11:11 a.m. with
10 a.m. Special Blend fellowship
and Sunday School for all ages
between services.

Nursery care will be available
throughout the morning.

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

Michael Villanueva carries supplies
to help the Gary Youth Mission team
during their Appalachia Service Project.

Submissions for the Sept./Oct. *Chimes* magazine are due by noon on Monday, August 3. 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.

More Than a Family Reunion: A Call to Fulfill Our Mission



*W*hat a joy to return to Gary United Methodist Church as your new senior pastor! I am thrilled to be “coming home” to the Gary Church family as we renew old relationships and begin new ones together.

I had the privilege of serving at Gary Church from 2009–2013 as associate pastor alongside now Bishop Tracy Smith Malone and the Rev. Jamie Geiger. During

those years, I focused on leading the mid-week Shine Worship service and facilitating youth ministries.

Gary was also an important part of our family’s journey – both of my children were confirmed here before eventually pursuing careers in Santa Fe, NM (my son Nathaniel), and Tacoma, WA (my daughter Rebekah). My wife Rhodalyn continues to work at NIU in DeKalb and just completed 29 years of teaching Filipino language and courses for the Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

Much has changed in the past 13 years for both Gary Church and for me. Gary has grieved the loss of beloved members, welcomed many new faces, navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and celebrated a fruitful merger with Aldersgate UMC. Through it all, the congregation has remained committed to vibrant worship, justice and faithful ministry.

Since leaving Gary, I served Oak Lawn First UMC for four years (2013-2017), helping the congregation reconnect with its surrounding community and local organizations. In 2017,

I accepted an appointment to DeKalb First UMC and worked with their amazing lay leadership to complete a 3-year capital campaign, construct a brand new building with no debt, and engage in a re-visioning process to set direction and priorities for the next decade.

Our Northern Illinois Conference blessed me with great training and leadership opportunities during these years through the Institute for Congregation Development (ICD), and I formed ongoing ministry partnerships with the “Purple Cow Pastors,” a group committed to creative and effective ministry. Since 2019, I also served as Chair of the NIC Congregational Development and Redevelopment Team, learning more about what it takes for churches not only to survive, but to grow, adapt and flourish.

In today’s rapidly changing world, every church faces new challenges and unfamiliar territory. What I hope to bring to Gary Church is a deep commitment to helping this church not just survive, but thrive. We can do that by facing change with courage, staying grounded in our calling to love God and love our neighbors, and remaining focused on The UMC’s mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As we move forward together, let’s be willing to try new things, fail boldly, learn from our experiences and continue growing in faith and ministry.

Are you ready to discover what God has in store for us? I can’t wait!

Pastor Jonathan Crail

Love
Courageously
1 Corinthians 16:14

Welcoming the Crails

Pastor Jonathan Crail's first official day as our senior pastor is *Wednesday, July 1*. Let's welcome him and his wife **Rhodalyne** with an extra-special Special Blend on *Sunday, July 12* at 10 a.m.

How can you help?

- Wear your nametag. If you need one, contact the Church Office.
- Make sure you have a photo in the online directory. If you need help with this, contact the Church Office.
- Introduce yourself, even if you have met the Crails before.
- Attend worship as often as you're able, especially this summer.
- Volunteer. The more active you are at church, the more you'll get to know each other.

Gary Church looks forward to serving in ministry together with the Crails this summer and beyond.



Special Sunday events in August

Golf outing to benefit Gary Youth

Aug. 2, tee times begin at 1 p.m., Klein Creek Golf Club



The 29th annual golf outing to support the programs of Gary Church's youth has provided an estimated \$3,000 each year. We plan to continue that tradition again with the scramble format. You do not have to excel at golf to participate. If you cannot play, you are welcome to contribute by joining our loyal team of hole sponsors. Cost is \$125 to play (including dinner) and \$125 to sponsor a hole. Youth cost is \$90 to play, including dinner. Register at garychurch.org. Questions? Contact **Bob Martin** through the Church Office.

Back-to-school backpack blessing

Aug. 9, 9 a.m., Sanctuary

School starts soon, so bring your backpack for a blessing!



Worship in the Park and Picnic

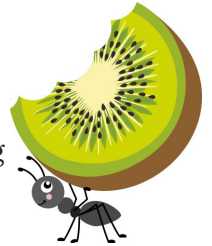
Aug. 16, 10 a.m., Memorial Park (note time and location)

Let's enjoy the last days of summer with worship in Memorial Park. It'll be a bit different than in years past, with more of a Family Camp worship feel. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy worship, food and fellowship.

Gary Church will provide fried chicken and lemonade. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share.

The Green Team asks you to bring your own reusable plates, cups, forks, etc. to help reduce garbage. The Green Team will provide some reusable dishes and cloth napkins, along with compost bins and recycling containers.

And, please bring your smiles as we will take an all-church photo!



All-church training

Aug. 23, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary

After worship at 9 a.m., grab some refreshments from Special Blend and then learn about new initiatives, what's happening in the ministry area(s) you serve and all-church policies.

Bike to Church

Aug. 30 (and any Sunday you like!)

Enjoy a bike ride to church, and park your bicycle at the rack near the Parking Lot.

Class meeting grows relationships

It's a simple question, "How is your relationship with God?" But it's not always a simple answer. Each Wednesday afternoon, members of the "Faith Anchor" Class Meeting check in with each other, answer the question and pray for each other.

"By sharing where I am in my faith journey and relationship with God, I take a deep look each week at how God is acting in my life. It is a reminder and the support I need."

-JoAnne Chase

"Joining a class meeting has been like having a family reunion with God each week. It holds me steady throughout the days and keeps my relationship with God in the forefront of my mind. It's like regular exercise. My faith grows stronger as I practice being in close relationship with God." **-Karen Binkerd**

"The open communication and caring attitude that has developed among our Faith Anchor community has motivated me to seek a closer relationship with God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit." **-Harry Chase**



The idea of the class meeting started in the year 1742, and it can be a transformative small group in our modern era. If you'd like to learn more about class meetings, you're welcome to contact **Karen Binkerd** through the Church Office to set up a date to observe.

ADULT Christian Education and Discipleship

Summer book read and film fellowship

Sunday, July 26, 10:10 a.m. and Wednesday, July 29, 6:30 p.m., Anderson Room

All are welcome to join **Pastor Daniel Cochran** in reading Claire Keegan's novella, *Small Things Like These* (Grove Press, 2021). Winner of the Orwell Prize for political writing and shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize, *Small Things* is a very short but "deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy" based on the true story of the infamous Magdalen laundries in Ireland.

Go ahead and pick up a copy and begin reading now! We will meet after worship on July 26 for a guided discussion. Then, on Wednesday evening, July 29, we will gather to watch and discuss the 2024 award-winning film adaptation directed by Tim Mielants starring Cillian Murphy and Emily Watson.



Summer Adult fellowship

Enjoy game night

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

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

Walkers & Talkers

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m., Commons

Stop in and chat with this welcoming fellowship group.

Create cards

Thursdays, 1 p.m., Heritage Room
resuming in August

Create the cards we send to people to let them know their Gary Church friends are thinking of them. No experience necessary.

Monday morning golfers

In the warmer months, these golfers try to play a different course each week on Monday mornings. If you'd like to be a regular golfer or a substitute, contact the Church Office to get on the email list.

Fourth Friday Breakfast

Fourth Friday of the month, 8:30 a.m.
Seven Dwarfs Restaurant, 917 E Roosevelt Rd.

All are welcome to join **Dan** and **Sandy Fridley** for food and fellowship. RSVP at garychurch.org to reserve your place at the table.

Men's pickleball

Mondays, 7 p.m., Activity Center

Let's get together for some fellowship, laughs and a little bit of exercise. No experience necessary. Sign up and sign the waiver at garychurch.org. Contact **Mark Mathis** through the Church Office for more information.

(Sunday adult education, Men's / Women's Bible studies and Anti-Racist Book Club will begin again in September. For more information about adult education and fellowship opportunities, go to garychurch.org.)

Journeys of Paul in Greece 2027

April 17–24, 2027 with an optional Greek Isle Cruise Extension April 23–27



Join **Carey Williams Bebar** and Educational Opportunities for the *Journeys of Paul Tour in Greece!* Walk in the footsteps of the apostle across Thessaloniki, Philippi, Berea, Corinth and Athens. Stand on Mars Hill, visit Philippi — home of Lydia, Paul's first recorded convert in Europe — and explore the ancient places where the Gospel first took root and spread throughout the world.

More than a tour, this pilgrimage is an invitation to encounter Scripture with fresh eyes and an open heart. Through daily devotions, conversation, learning and fellowship, travelers will experience the biblical story in a living classroom full of sacred wonder. Plus, they can take in the majestic beauty of the Greek islands with an optional Greek Isle Cruise extension, with stops including Mykonos, Ephesus, Patmos, Crete, Santorini and Athens.

Whether you are a seasoned traveler or considering your first pilgrimage abroad, you won't want to miss this unforgettable journey of faith-filled discovery and holy adventure. Full itinerary and pricing details at garychurch.org/registrations.

Register early for a discounted rate: 7/17, \$100 off; 8/17, \$75 off.

Learn more at the informational sessions:

- Wednesdays, July 15 & Aug. 5, 7 p.m. on Zoom
- Sunday, Aug. 9, 10:10 a.m., in the Anderson Room

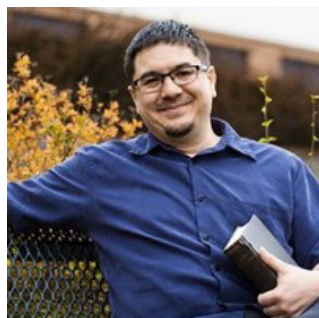
Questions? Contact **Carey Williams Bebar**, cbebar@garychurch.org.

Museum Tour

Visit the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Museum

Saturday, Aug. 8, 9 a.m.-approximately 3 p.m.

Travel back in time at the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC) Museum, formerly known as the Oriental Institute. Since 1919, ISAC has been a world-renowned center for the study of ancient civilizations. Its museum houses more than 350,000 artifacts, offering a glimpse into the beginnings of human history, culture and religion.



Join **Dr. Daniel Somboonsiri** for a guided tour of the museum from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. as we explore treasures from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia and beyond.

Cost: \$15 adults | \$10 children

Register: garychurch.org

Participants may drive separately or travel with the group. Group transportation will depart Gary Church at 9 a.m. and return at approximately 3 p.m.

The museum is located at the University of Chicago, 1155 E. 58th St., Chicago. Following the tour, we will enjoy lunch together in Hyde Park before returning home. Lunch is not included in the registration fee.



Happy summertime, families!

There is so much to soak up in summer – from lemonade stands to water park slides and starry skies. We pray that you are enjoying the gifts of the season and loving every moment. Blessings and see you Sunday!

what we're teaching

We are Family

Nothing brings a family together – or stirs up some friendly drama – like a family game night! Just like in games, family life can have its own ups and downs, whether it's with our given or chosen families. In this series, kids will explore how Abraham's family navigated challenges and blessings while learning how we can care for our families, serve them well, and remember that we're all part of God's family. As they do, kids will learn that we can believe God's promises, we can pray for our families, we can trust God to provide, and we're all welcome in God's family.

what's happening

Park Babies

Saturdays, July 25 and Aug. 22, 12 p.m.
Northside Park

Parents and caregivers of children ages 3 and under are invited to connect with other Gary Church families, build friendships and enjoy a relaxed time outdoors. Bring your little ones for playtime while parents share conversation, encouragement and community. Whether you're new to Gary Church or have been attending for years, we'd love to see you there. RSVP at garychurch.org/registrations or just come!

Summer Kids' Church

Sundays through Sept. 6, 9 a.m.

Summer is a great time for fun with friends, and that's what summer Kids' Church is all about! All summer long, kids will get to enjoy Bible-based activities and games before cooling off with pop-sicles in the Courtyard.



Families are invited to Pine Lake Camp in Westfield, Wisconsin to spend a weekend growing closer to God and each other through nature, worship and play. Register at garychurch.org.

Accommodations

Retreat Center Room: Hotel style with private bath including 1 queen bed and 1 twin bed with twin trundle.

Cost: \$180 per room + \$40 per person after 2 (family of 3...\$220, family of 4...\$260, etc.).

Meals:

Cost: \$75 per person 13+ and \$45 per child ages 3-12

Activity Fee:

\$40 per family covers the cost of weekend crafts and activities



Kane County Cougars Game, Video Game Night

Friday, July 31, 6:30 p.m.



Take me out to the ballgame! All are invited to this fun family event. Special promotions include: One Nintendo Switch giveaway per inning, Friday Frenzy, Post Game Fireworks, plus kids can run the bases after the game weather permitting. Tickets are \$10 per person, with preferred parking for \$10 per pass. Register at garychurch.org by *Wednesday, July 22*, and pick up your tickets in church on *Sunday, July 26*. For details, contact **Carey Williams Bebar**, cbebar@garychurch.org.

Camp Gary returns

Camp Gary will be back this fall with expanded hours! The days offered will be *Fridays, Sept. 25* and *Oct. 9* and *Monday, Nov. 2*. The new time will be *9 a.m. to 2 p.m.* The campers will bring their own lunch for a noon time lunch break. (It will be optional for children to leave at lunchtime if a half day is preferable.)

Activities will include games, stories, songs, crafts, snacks and fun time hanging out with friends. Registration will be open to preschool through fifth grade. And, if you need it, you'll have access to a quiet workspace stocked with coffee and donuts. Register at garychurch.org.



Congratulations! 2026 Graduates

Ellie Ashby, granddaughter of Mike and Marlene Ashby, graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Ellie is working for Parallon HCA Healthcare, Nashville, TN.

Grace Ashby, granddaughter of Mike and Marlene Ashby, graduated from Centennial High School and will be attending the University of Tennessee majoring in business administration.

Leah Austin, daughter of Ron and Kim Austin, graduated from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design and a minor in Sociology.

Rylee Barth, daughter of Shawn and David Barth, graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South and will be attending the College of DuPage majoring in interior design.

Mark Bianco, son of Jessica and Rich Bianco, graduated from Carthage College with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management.

Luke Boba, son of Matthew and Krista Boba, graduated from Wheaton North High School and will be attending Knox College majoring in secondary education.

Eric Brunner, son of John and Nancy Brunner, graduated from Illinois State University with a Master of Science in Hydrogeology.

Kait Buterbaugh, granddaughter of Bob and Madge Drake, graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with a master's degree in Dairy Science.

Brenna Carey, daughter of Marilyn McGinn, graduated from Maryville University with a master's degree in Nursing—Nurse Practitioner. Brenna will be working with a practice in North Kansas City in endocrinology.

Ty Carey, son of Marilyn McGinn, graduated from the University of Wyoming. Ty will be starting an internship this summer in Haxton, CO, working in agricultural business.

Matthew Garza, grandson of Bob and Madge Drake, graduated from Wheaton North High School, and will be attending the University of Kentucky.

Carter Gaul, son of Leigh Ann and David Gaul, graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance.

Ian Harrison, son of Don and Michelle Harrison, graduated from Wheaton North High School and will be attending Carthage College.

Caitlin Johnson, daughter of Kim and Perry Johnson, granddaughter of Howard and Esther Nicholas, graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Gies Business School with a double major in Information Systems and Marketing and a minor in Sustainability. Caitlin will be working for Ernst and Young.

Will Johnson, son of Mike and Kerri Johnson, graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be going to the College of DuPage, attending the Welding Technology Program.

Jacob Kenyon, grandson of Shelley and Don Kenyon, graduated from Georgia Southern with a Bachelor of Science and will be pursuing a Master of Business Administration at Georgia North.

Logan Kenyon, grandson of Shelley and Don Kenyon, graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science and will be pursuing a Master of Business Administration at the University of Georgia.

Jake Kurtz, son of Joe and Pam Kurtz, graduated from Wheaton North High School and will be attending Concordia University Chicago

Melanie Kurtz, daughter of Joe and Pam Kurtz, graduated from George Washington University with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology.

Annie Macabobby, daughter of Pete and Kathryn Macabobby, graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering and will be working as a civil renewable engineer.

Grace Macabobby, daughter of Pete and Kathryn Macabobby, graduated from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a Bachelor of Science. Grace will be working as a financial analyst at Molson Coors.

Michael Macabobby, son of Pete and Kathryn Macabobby, graduated from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry.

Congratulations! 2026 Graduates

Christopher Marra, son of Dave and Suzanne Marra, grandson of Howard and Barbara Wonser, graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Chris will be working as an auditor for RSM US LLP.

Anna Mathis, daughter of Mark and Janet Mathis, will graduate from Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering, December 2026, and is pursuing a master's degree from Purdue.

Alex McCarthy, grandson of Shelley and Don Kenyon, graduated from Bakersfield High School and will be attending Bakersfield Community College.

James McGraw, grandson of Jim and Donna Trieschmann, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Wheaton College and will be going to Samford University Beeson Divinity School Birmingham.

Rachel Meyer, granddaughter of Allen and Ellen Reed, graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science in Product Design and will be working as a 3D design coordinator.

Jose Pichardo, grandson of Allen and Ellen Reed, graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be attending the College of DuPage majoring in business.

Cameron Rewiski, daughter of Mark and Heather Rewiski, graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be attending the University of Montana majoring in Communications and participating in their dance team.

Stephanie Riley, daughter of Debbie Riley, granddaughter of Verla Jefferson, graduated from the University of South Carolina with a PhD in History.

Sarah Rodriguez, daughter of Eddie and Julie Rodriguez, graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign with a Bachelor of Science in Integrative Biology and is working in insect pest management and agricultural research at the University of Illinois.

Ella Rodriguez, daughter of Eddie and Julie Rodriguez, graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a Spanish and Public Relations double minor and is interning with the Chicago White Sox on the Community Relations team.

Zoe Rozwat, daughter of Jack and Lisa Rozwat, graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Arts and is looking for a career in merchandising.

Jacob Uhlmann, grandson of Mike and Marlene Ashby, graduated from Northern Illinois University with a Master of Public Administration. Jacob is working for the Village of Bartlett, IL.

Eleanor Wang, daughter of Michelle Sweeney and John Wang, graduated from Wheaton North High School.

Kate Wanzenberg, daughter of Anne and Matthew Wanzenberg, granddaughter of Bonnie Wheaton, graduated from Wake Forest University with degrees in Psychology and Statistics and will be pursuing her PhD in School Psychology at the University of Tennessee.

Madison Westcomb, daughter of Carolyn and Nathan Westcomb, graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be attending Miami University majoring in marketing and entrepreneurship.

Caroline Wheatley, granddaughter of Dick and Julie Raab, graduated from Oswego East High School and will be attending the University of Louisville majoring in environmental science.

Emma Wheatley, granddaughter of Dick and Julie Raab, graduated from Oswego East High School and will be attending Guelph University majoring in animal science.



GARY CHURCH *makes a difference*

Gary Church to host CROP Walk next year

Sunday, May 2, 2027, 1 p.m. check in, 2 p.m. walk

Mark your calendar as Gary Church will host the 2027 Wheaton/Glen Ellyn Area CROP Walk on Sunday, May 2. We will need walkers, volunteers and fundraisers. Watch the e-news and upcoming Chimes editions for ways to get involved.

This year's 42nd annual CROP Walk continued the fight against hunger with nine churches and organizations participating. With 70 total walkers, the event raised over \$23,000 for local and global food and clean water support efforts. Gary Church's 13 walkers exceeded our goal of \$4,000. Thank you to all who supported, donated and walked.

The Glen House Food Pantry hosted the walk in 2026, which has expanded to include a snack center. The center provides over 800 snack kits to DuPage County children on a weekly basis. This year's walk raised funds for the Glen House Food Pantry, People's Resource Center, DuPage Seniors and other organizations around the world.



5,000+ meals and counting

This year, Gary Church will provide seven of Radical Time Out's monthly meals, and your help is welcome! RTO, through Koinonia House prison ministries, is a place for former inmates to gather, and it serves as a support system for families who have a loved one in prison. It's a time of fellowship, prayer, testimonies and Bible teaching.

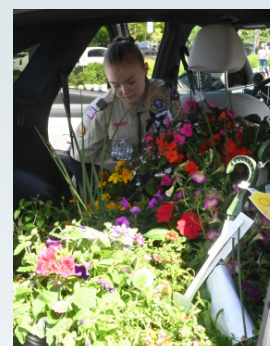
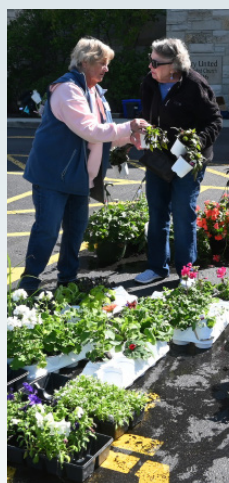
Joy Circle, Mary Martha Circle and **Sandy Koropp's** cooking crew provide the meals for RTO from Gary Church. We started cooking meals for RTO in April 2017, and as of May 2026, we've served 74 monthly meals, each feeding about 80 people – that's roughly 5,920 meals! Right now, RTO meets at Well-spring Alliance Church in Wheaton on Thursday evenings.

You can help in many ways. You can provide funds for groceries at garychurch.org/give. If you can help cook or serve, contact **Sandy Koropp** or **Judy Grote** through the Church Office.



Plants with a Purpose thanks you

The Plants with a Purpose sale raised more than \$3,300, which will be distributed to several missions and ministries of Gary Church. Thank you to everyone who purchased plants and to all who helped sort and load plants on delivery day!



Gary Church connects with Mercedes Ann Foundation



If you watch Wheaton's Fourth of July parade, be sure to look for the Mercedes Ann Foundation float. Gary Church's BLAST Campers not only helped to build the float, but they collected fishing equipment for the foundation too.

The Mercedes Ann Foundation's mission is to empower children impacted by parental incarceration, providing outdoor experiences to facilitate educational, emotional and spiritual growth. Mercedes Ann Morgan was born in 2002 when her dad, Scott, was in prison. Her early years were spent in a fatherless home, and the two of them found it hard to bond in the visitation room. Even when Scott was released and returned home, the struggle continued. It wasn't until they enjoyed time outdoors, and especially fishing, that their relationship flourished. Tragically, Mercedes Ann was killed in a car accident just a few weeks before her 21st birthday in 2023. On Jan. 1, 2024, Scott and Amy Morgan established the Mercedes Ann Foundation.

Each month the nonprofit plans outdoor activities for children whose parents are currently or have been incarcerated. Their next activity is participating in Wheaton's Fourth of July parade. Please consider attending the parade and cheering them on. (Also notice the boat on the float, as it was donated by **Pastor Mary Zajac's** brother-in-law.) Learn more about the foundation and what you can do to help at mersadesannfoundation.org.



Shuttle bus riders needed

Monday, July 13, Monday, July 20, Friday, July 31, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Outreach Carol Stream is looking for volunteers to serve as shuttle bus riders during local outings and activities for older adults in our community. These trips provide more than transportation – they offer connection, encouragement and support that help older adults maintain their independence and stay engaged in community life.



Volunteer shuttle bus riders help welcome participants, assist older adults on and off the shuttle bus, provide friendly conversation, and help create a warm and caring environment during outings. No prior experience is needed. Volunteers will receive training on using the lift on the shuttle bus and will always serve alongside another volunteer or staff member. Register to help at weareoutreach.org

Register for Blood Drive

Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2-6 p.m., Commons

Each pint donated can save up to three lives. The need is constant, and every pint is precious. Register at garychurch.org. Walk-ins also welcome.

Upcoming date:

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday, Nov. 8.

Recycle Styrofoam

Sunday, July 19

8:45-10:30 a.m., South Driveway.

Can you help with collection or driving duties? If so, please contact **Elaine McCluskey** through the Church Office.

Next recycling date: Oct. 18. If you miss the date, feel free to drop off Styrofoam at Dart Container Corporation, 310 Evergreen Dr., North Aurora



Meet Blessing and Taisha

Thanks to the generosity of Gary Church, Educate a Girl scholarships continue support of girls and young women of all ages, including primary age girls at the Kinyago Dandora Schools (KDS) in Nairobi, Kenya. The KDS system continuously seeks children and families most vulnerable in the Dandora Dump area and brings the children into the school where they receive not only education, but also health care, nutrition and food support for their families.

Since 2021, we have supported two girls in KDS - Angel is now in 8th grade and Joy is in 4th grade. We are excited to introduce two additional scholarship recipients - Blessing and Taisha.

Blessing just turned 7 years old. She is one of six children, and her parents struggle to find stable work. Due to financial difficulties, Blessing has been held out of school until recently. Blessing will now be secure in her educational pursuits.

Taisha is 5 years old and in preschool at KDS. She and her two siblings live with her grandmother. Her grandfather recently passed away and her mother struggles with substance abuse issues. Fortunately, Taisha will now receive a quality education and food assistance for her family.

Gary Church and Educate a Girl are helping to improve the lives of Blessing and Taisha, along with many others around the world, with an educational foundation that will positively impact their future.

Congratulations to Aaliyah

Aaliyah Begay has been an EAG scholarship recipient since 2023. Gary Church welcomed Aaliyah and her family for a Native American Dance Performance in October 2024. We are happy to share that Aaliyah has graduated from Chicago's Columbia College. Congratulations Aaliyah!

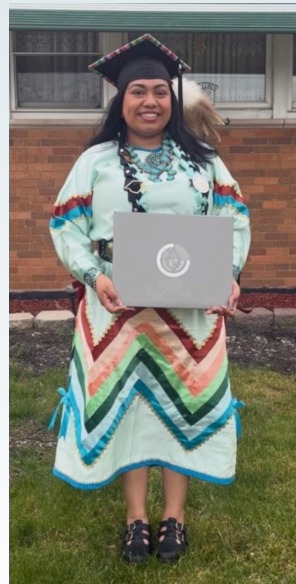
If you'd like to contribute to scholarships through Educate a Girl, go to garychurch.org/give.



Blessing



Taisha



Aaliyah

Help Care for Creation

The Green Team thanks all those who helped with our spring creation care focus – we hope you learned something new and deepened your connection to God's creation. This summer we encourage you to:



- look for a rain barrel around the Wesley Center that is collecting water for the gardens.
- join us at our second net-zero waste picnic after the Aug. 16 Worship in the Park at 10 a.m. at Memorial Park. Details on page 5.
- bring your Styrofoam on July 19 for collection in the South Driveway before and after worship – we will drive it to Dart Container recycling center in Aurora – or you can take it yourself. Please do not bring material before July 19 and put it in the storage room “garage” space – we cannot store this material there.
- plant, weed, water and harvest Gary Church's garden plots at Wheaton Park District's Atten Park. Produce grown in the Common Ground garden will be delivered to local food pantries. Sign up to help at garychurch.org.

For more information about Gary's Green Team, contact **Elaine McCluskey** and **Mark Mathis** through the Church Office. Keep up to date with Green Team activities: garychurch.org/resources/green-team.

Spread the Good Word with Gary's AV Team

by Mark Mathis

And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16:15

Many don't realize that Gary Church has a nationwide, even international following – all thanks to a ministry that you may not have thought twice about.

Each week, our services are streamed to those across the western suburbs, the nation and the globe. They reach those who can't physically make it to church, snowbirds in other states, and those who may be shopping for a new church home. In fact, the online archive of recent services on our website is often the first place church shoppers look when researching Gary. More than a few have gone on to become church members after seeing what we have to offer.

Gary Church first acquired the equipment to stream from the Sanctuary at about the same time COVID-19 was taking hold. In those early days, just the audio visual (AV) team and pastors were physically present. The congregation watched from the socially distant safety of home, and AV teams consisted of members of the same family “bubble.”

Fast forward to today, and our capabilities have matured. We live stream both the 9 a.m. and 11:11 a.m. services, and the recordings are later posted at garychurch.org. If you've ever been to the Balcony, you may have seen the AV station, where the team works in pairs, relying on each other to marry sound and picture at the right time in the right way.

The person on the left of the AV console controls the audio board and makes sure microphones are turned on and off, and that everything is generally sounding like it should. They also control the two cameras, punching up the right angles on cue. The person on the right controls the visuals, advancing slides and melding them with camera shots to create the overall look.

The AV team is currently in need of additional members. Training is provided; you can serve as little as once a month; and you'll get to work with a great group of individuals. But above all, you'll be making a difference in the lives of many – one piece of a much larger worship puzzle.

Interested? Please reach out to the Church Office, office@garychurch.org.





Gary Youth



Stay connected

Visit garychurch.org and navigate to our youth page, receive weekly Gary Youth emails, plus follow us on Instagram ([gary_youth](https://www.instagram.com/gary_youth)) and Facebook (Gary Youth).

Here's what's happening this summer

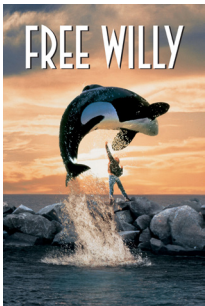
We invite all Gary Youth to participate in our fun summer events. Use the QR code, or go to garychurch.org/ministries/gary-youth to let us know you are coming!



Movie Under the Stars: Free Willy

(All families of Gary Youth and Gary Kids)

Tuesday, July 7, 8-10 p.m., Courtyard



Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, snacks and family for a movie under the stars! Free Willy is a family adventure-drama about Jesse, a troubled foster kid who forms an unexpected bond with Willy, a captive killer whale at a marine park. As Jesse learns to care for Willy, he discovers the park plans to get rid of the whale for profit, and he races to help free Willy and return him to the ocean. Popcorn will be provided. RSVP by *Sunday, July 5* so we know how much popcorn to have ready!

Six Flags Great America

(All families of Gary Youth)

Tuesday, July 21, 9 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

estimated cost: \$30-\$40

Come for a fun day at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee! We'll spend the day together enjoying rides and hanging out. Please RSVP by *Wednesday, July 8* so we can determine ticket individual cost and transportation.



A Day in Chicago (High School)

Thursday, July 9, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

\$30, scholarship available

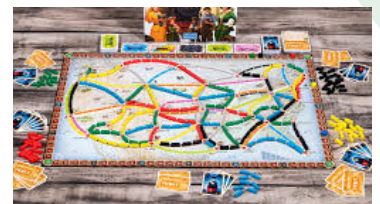
We will take the Metra train to experience some of the fun Chicago has to offer. The \$30 cost will cover transportation only. Please bring additional money for lunch, dessert and souvenirs. We recommend \$30. RSVP by *Sunday, July 5*.



Rock-in Lock-In (High School)

Friday, July 24, 7 p.m.- Saturday, July 25, 8 a.m., \$10

Get ready for a Rock-in Lock-In! We're inviting other United Methodist youth groups to join us for an overnight of fun at Gary Church with games, snacks and time to connect. Come meet new friends and grow together in faith. Please RSVP by *Friday, July 10* so we can plan for food and activities.



Gary Youth communications

We want to make sure that you are connected to our ministry here at Gary Youth. You can read Gary Church's *Chimes* magazine for a bimonthly report. You will also receive email and reminder texts. You can also reach **Dan Lee** any day except Saturdays. Let him know (dlee@garychurch.org) if you are not receiving these communications and he will get you connected.

Gary Church App

Did you know that Gary Church has an app that can make signing up for Gary Youth events faster and easier? Search "Church by MinistryOne" in your app store and download. Find Gary United Methodist Church and log in under the profile tab. If you need help, contact the Church Office.



Congratulations Graduates



Congratulations high school graduating class of 2026. Please continue to lift them up in your prayers as they embark on a new adventure post high school! A special thank you to the Gary Church Knitters for lovingly making afghans for the graduates.

Let us Know

We want to celebrate you and the amazing gifts God is growing in your life! If you have a concert, game, exhibit, ceremony, party — or any special moment worth cheering — let us know about it. Fill out the quick form on our youth page at garychurch.org, and we'll do our best to show up, celebrate and cheer you on loud and proud!



What has Gary Youth been up to?

Take a look at photos from some of our gatherings over the last few months.



Blessings For All The Days Ahead

Members and Friends of Gary Church,

It has been a joy and privilege to work with you for the last nine months. Gary Church is a vital faith community engaged in truly meaningful service. It really is a wonderful place to grow in joyful faith and serve all in love. Thank you for welcoming me, and everyone who comes through the doors, so willingly!

My prayers will be with you in the months ahead as you welcome Pastor Jonathan Crail back to Gary Church. I'm excited to see where Christ will take this community over the years ahead!

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mary Zajac



Gary Church Endowment Committee 2.0

After about a 10-year hibernation period, Gary United Methodist Church has re-established our Endowment Committee. The committee consists of five at large members (**Jack Rozwat** – Chair, **Ron Austin**, **Jane Bilezikian**, **Cathy Mousseau** and **Holly Trueblood**) and four designated members (Senior Pastor/**Jonathan Crail**, Finance/**James Morris**, Trustees/**David Plate** and Business/**Deb Evans**).



The initial focus of the team has two major threads. One subgroup is working to ensure endowment assets are optimally managed and aligned with Gary Church and donor wishes. The other group is working on ways to both educate and encourage Gary Church members/friends to consider making the church part of their legacy planning. If anyone has questions or experience to offer, reach out to any committee member.

August is National Make-A-Will Month

To encourage more Americans to create a will, August has been designated as National Make-A-Will Month. In a will, you are able to select who receives assets and property, appoint guardians for young children, identify caretakers for pets, outline funeral preferences and more.

Three reasons to create a will:

1. Protect yourself and your loved ones. Having a will, regardless of your socioeconomic status, can save your loved ones from stressful uncertainty after your passing. It can prevent a complicated legal process.
2. Manage distribution of your assets. A will clearly regulates the process of transferring ownership of assets. It also allows you to define who will manage the process.
3. Establish a lasting legacy. A will is an opportunity for you to define your legacy on your own terms and create a lasting impact through the organizations that are important to you.

If you would like to learn more about including Gary Church in your will, please contact the Church Office. If you have already included Gary Church in your estate plan, please let us know so we can be sure to thank you.

Recent Church Council approvals

The Church Council recently approved the request from Church & Society for Gary Church to be a local partner of the group, Christians Against Christian Nationalism. The Church Council also approved the motion to prohibit smoking on Gary Church property.

July birthdays*

Happy (90+) birthday to:

Judy Leo

August birthdays*

Happy (90+) birthday to:

Judy Fischer
Sharon Lloyd
Harry Chase

August anniversaries*

Happy anniversary (50+) to:

Dan & Sandy Fridley
Steve & Jamie Hanna Williams
Bob & Virginia Isgren
Dan & Suzy Wible
Ed & Alice Williams
Howard & Barbara Wonser

Baptisms

Sophia Johnson baptized on May 10.
Liam Stoneberg baptized on May 10.
Imogen Somboonsiri baptized on May 10.
Ezra Tatnall baptized on May 10.
Avery Holman baptized on May 10.
Margot Kaiser, daughter of Matt and Lauren Kaiser, granddaughter of Rick and Lisa Grigsby, on May 10.

Our sympathy

David, Cindy and John Plate on the death of Cindy's father, Joe Meyers, on April 18.
The family of former Gary member, Joan Jones. Joan passed away on May 23.
Eileen Murphy Amlee and Brian Skaj on the death of their brother and uncle, Michael Murphy, on May 25.
The family of Larry Gage. Larry passed away on May 29.
Beth, Andy, Annabelle, Zachary, Ethan and Hannah Tobias on the death of Beth's brother, Chris Berzac.
Jim and Jan Aellig on the death of Jan's sister, Mary Rowell, on June 14.
Mark, Carson and Cameron Rewiski on the death of their wife and mother, Heather, on June 24.

New opportunities*

Pastor Mary Zajac, our interim senior pastor, will be returning to retirement on July 1.

Thank you

So much gratitude...

Your team is absolutely incredible. You continue to show up for over 20 years to build lives through the homes that you help build. Your prayers, smiles, loving hearts and experience are such a blessing to us and the people we serve. Thank you for the generous donation, and thank you for spending another week with our Habitat family!



Habitat for Humanity Lafayette, Indiana

Thank you to the congregation for being so thoughtful. To all who participated in one way or another in support of our musical, "Fired Up!" We couldn't do it without you. May God bless each of you the way you bless this congregation!

Peace,
Melinda & Miss Ellie

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

Worship in the Park

Sunday, August 16, 10 a.m.

Memorial Park

See page 5 for details

