

Chimes

The Magazine of Gary United Methodist Church
September/October 2026



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Chimes VOLUME LXXIV, ISSUE V

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Sunday Worship

9 a.m. and 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

Hooray for Worship in the Park!

Don't see your picture? Check out the slides on the Stairway and Commons monitors. You just never know who you might see.

Submissions for the Nov./Dec. *Chimes* magazine are due by noon on Thursday, Oct. 1. 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.

Come sit with me

You're part of an amazing congregation, Gary Church! So how did you get here? What first brought you to this community of faith? Did someone invite you – perhaps a family member, a neighbor or a friend?

Just reach out and say, "Come sit with me."

National surveys indicate that over 80% of church goers attend a church because someone invited them. Unfortunately, while most people are part of a church because of those personal invitations, the same surveys show that only about 2% of church members actually invite someone to church in a given year.

When was the last time you invited a friend or neighbor or co-worker to join you at church? That may seem like a difficult ask. Talking about faith or talking about church can feel uncomfortable in some of our relationships and contacts.

The pastors and staff of Gary Church want to give you some assistance in making invitations easier to do. We hope to create "a culture of invitation," where inviting somebody to church isn't a rare thing, but a common occurrence.

Oftentimes, the entry point into a church family isn't Sunday morning worship, but another activity or event. There are book discussions, musical events and concerts, church picnics, golf outings, adult study classes and many more starting places for people to be introduced to our amazing church family.

Yet Sunday worship can also give us opportunities. We will be offering worship series on topics and issues that concern all of us. These are what we call "Come sit with me" opportunities, where we can reach out to individuals who haven't been connected to our congregation and say something like, "I think you might enjoy or resonate with this topic our pastors will be talking about in church. Please come sit with me this Sunday."

Starting Sept. 6, we will begin a worship series entitled, "Making Sense of the Bible." Do you ever have difficulty making sense of what you read in the Bible? What questions do you have about the Bible? Do people you know have similar questions? The Bible can be uplifting and life-giving and also confusing and even appalling and R-rated at times. How are we supposed to interpret it and make sense of it in today's world?

Here's the challenge: Think about one or two people in your circle of influence that you could invite to a church activity or worship, or maybe this important series that starts soon. Just reach out and say, "Come sit with me."

Pastor Jonathan Crail



Cut and share

Throughout the *Chimes*, think about what activities you plan to attend and who you'd like to invite. Feel free to cut up the *Chimes* and share the articles!





"Come Sit with Me" sermon series *making sense of the bible*

The Bible can be uplifting and life-giving and contains some of the loftiest and most beautiful verses in literature. Millions look to it for inspiration and guidance.

At the same time, some parts are confusing and others are deeply disturbing. If you've ever had questions about the Bible, we'd like to invite you to join us for a series of honest and frank messages entitled "Making Sense of the Bible" on *Sundays at 9 a.m. and 11:11 a.m.*

Bible Interpretation: What the Bible Is and Is Not

Sept. 6

Is the Bible the Word of God? Who wrote the Bible? And what framework or lens should we use to understand and interpret it?

Can We Trust the Bible? A High View of Scripture

Sept. 13

Why we need to take the Bible seriously, but not literally.

Biblical Application: Women and Slavery in the Bible

Sept. 20

The Bible has been used historically to exclude women from leadership and to justify and even endorse slave-ownership. Why do we read the Bible differently on these topics today?

Biblical Application: Homosexuality and the Bible

Sept. 27

LGBTQ+ rights are a hot topic in today's culture and even caused a split in The United Methodist Church. What are some of the perspectives on how to understand what the Bible says or doesn't say about homosexuality?

Does the Whole World Read the Same Bible?

Oct. 4

On this World Communion Sunday, we ask, "Do people in different countries and different cultures read the Bible differently? How does our location impact how we see the text and live it out?"

Continue to make sense of the Bible through our adult education series at 10 a.m. in the Anderson Room, How to Read the Bible. Learn more on page 6.



Children and Youth: Be an Acolyte in Worship

Starting Sept. 6

Acolytes have a special job: they carry the "Light of Christ" into the Sanctuary at the beginning of worship, leading the pastors and lighting the altar candles. At the end of worship, they extinguish the candles and carry the light out "into the world." This important role is a meaningful way for children and youth to grow in their understanding and experience of worship. All ages are welcome, but young children may need a little help from a parent or guardian. Please contact **Pastor Daniel Cochran** for more information or contact the Church Office to sign up.

Celebrating, Blessing *and Remembering*

World Communion Sunday: Looking for Languages

Oct. 4, 9 a.m. and 11:11 a.m., Sanctuary

World Communion Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate the universal church that Christ opens to people of all ages, nations and races. To celebrate this day, we will read a short Scripture passage in a variety of languages. If you are comfortable reading aloud in a language other than English, please let **Pastor Daniel Cochran** know, dcochran@garychurch.org.



Pet Blessing Sunday

Oct. 4, 3 p.m.-4 p.m., Courtyard

All people and their pets of all kinds (stuffed animals, too!) are invited to our annual "Blessing of the Animals." The event will begin with a reading from Scripture, a brief prayer and then individual blessings for all critters (weather permitting).



All Saints' Day Worship

Nov. 1, 9 a.m. and 11:11 a.m., Sanctuary

On All Saints' Day, we remember and celebrate all faithful Christians who have passed away but whose witness continues to shape our faith today. You'll have the opportunity to name aloud and pray over our beloved saints, light candles in their honor and then partake in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, which we share with the "great cloud of witnesses." If you will be unable to attend either service and have a name you would like to have read aloud, please contact **Pastor Daniel Cochran**, dcochran@garychurch.org.

Annual theme announced

We will focus our ministry year on "Listening, Loving, Leading".

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?"

Romans 15:1-2 (The Message)

Learn more about our theme in worship, education, mission opportunities and more. Watch the e-news for practical ways of listening, loving, leading.

**Listening
Loving
Leading**

Romans 15:1-2

ADULT Christian Education and Discipleship

How to Read the Bible

Sundays, Sept. 13-Oct. 4, 10:10 a.m., Anderson Room
led by Dr. Michael Graves and Dr. Daniel Somboonsiri

How do we read the Bible faithfully? This series will explore practical approaches to reading Scripture, considering its historical context, literary genres and theological themes while equipping participants with tools to engage the Bible with greater confidence and curiosity. Join Bible scholars **Dr. Michael Graves** and **Dr. Daniel Somboonsiri** for this study, open to people new to the Bible through lifelong learners of Scripture.



Canopy of Creation

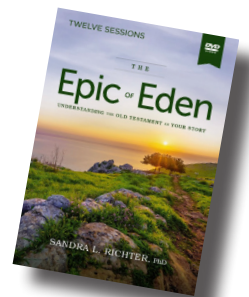
Sundays, Oct. 11-25, 10:10 a.m., Anderson Room

Trees are essential to community health and climate resilience to heat and flooding. However, not all communities have equal access to the benefits trees provide. Planting trees in areas that have not historically had access to the benefits of trees is one element of creation justice. Learn from presentations and speakers about where tree inequity exists in the Chicago area, how programs such as the Chicago Region Tree Initiative are working to correct inequities and how God might be calling us to participate in this aspect of caring for God's creation.

Epic of Eden Bible Study

Mondays, 7 p.m., beginning Sept. 21, Heritage Room, led by Dr. Daniel Somboonsiri

Does the Old Testament sometimes feel like a collection of disconnected stories and events? In this 12-week video study, Old Testament scholar Dr. Sandra Richter brings the biblical narrative together into one sweeping story of God's redeeming grace, while **Dr. Daniel Somboonsiri** leads our Monday evening discussions. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the Old Testament's history, culture and how it continues to shape our faith today.



Tuesday Morning Study Group

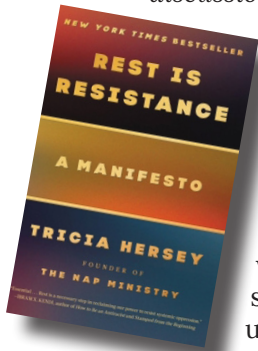
Every Tuesday starting Sept. 15, 10 a.m., Commons

This friendly group will journey through the gospels, starting with Mark. We will spend 5-6 weeks on the key points in Mark and then proceed to Matthew, finishing it before Advent. We will listen to a 15-minute video and then discuss how the gospel can be applied to our daily lives. Preparation for each week will include reading 4-5 chapters of the gospel and considering what resonates with you. Please join us, even if you cannot attend every week. If you have questions, contact **Jeff Bray** through the Church Office.

Anti-Racist Book Club

Rest Is Resistance

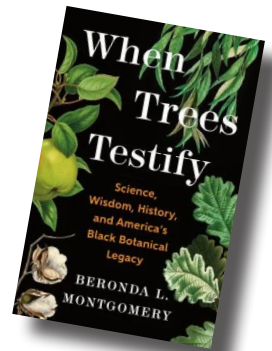
Wednesdays, Sept. 23 & Oct. 28, 7 p.m.
discussion led by Carey Williams Bebar



In *Rest Is Resistance*, author Tricia Hersey, aka the Nap Bishop, casts an illuminating light on our troubled relationship with rest and how to imagine and dream our way to a future where rest is exalted. Our worth does not reside in how much we produce, especially not for a system that exploits and dehumanizes us. Rest, in its simplest form, becomes an act of resistance and a reclaiming of power because it asserts our most basic humanity. We are enough. The systems cannot have us.

When Trees Testify

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 7 p.m.
discussion led by Elaine McCluskey



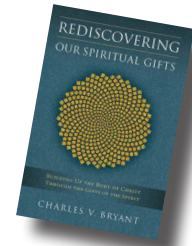
In *When Trees Testify*, plant biologist Beronda L. Montgomery weaves together science, personal memoir, and African American history to argue that trees are living witnesses to Black American life. She explores seven tree species and the cotton shrub, highlighting both the trauma and resilience interwoven with them.

Read the books on your own and register to join the discussion at garychurch.org.

Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m., Anderson Room, starting Sept. 8

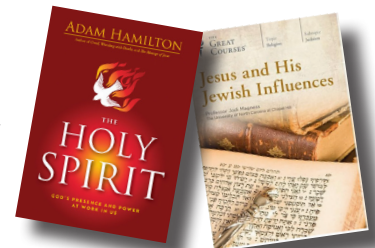
Referencing the Bible while studying Charles Bryant's best-selling book, *Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts*, we'll engage in a six-week challenge to identify and apply our unique gifts and talents in our life and how to build up the body of Christ, our church. Contact **Steve Novy** through the Church Office for more information.



Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays, 3 p.m., Anderson Room, starting Sept. 9

The group will kick off the season with Adam Hamilton's *The Holy Spirit*. Starting Oct. 14, Women's Bible Study will begin an all-video program from the Great Courses, *Jesus and His Jewish Influences* with Professor Jodi Magness. Contact **Holly Trueblood** through the Church Office for more information.



Medicare 101

Monday, Sept. 21, 11 a.m. or 7 p.m., Anderson Room

Have you ever felt confused about Medicare? Do you find yourself asking questions like: "How does it work?" "How is it organized?" "Am I eligible?" "When can I enroll?" "What are my options?" "Where can I find reliable resources?" Join **Brian Felker Jones**, president of Anchor Insurance Advisory, for an educational class on the basics of Medicare. Enjoy light refreshments and plenty of time for questions.

NEW Fellowship Opportunities at Gary



Plein Air watercolor painting

Saturday, Sept. 12, 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Adams Park

Join **Pam Keller** for our annual session of plein air (outdoor) watercolor painting in Adams Park. No painting experience expected. Register at garychurch.org.

Mark your calendars for these other fun art and fellowship opportunities:

- Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Ceramics (with additional sessions on Nov. 12 and Nov. 21)
- Saturday, Jan. 9, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., assemblage and collage
- Thursday, Feb. 4 (on zoom) Lenten art and faith with **Pastor Daniel Cochran**
- March TBD: open art studio
- Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., framed live botanicals
- Friday, June 4-Saturday, June 5, Gary Church Art Gallery

Methodist Mahjong

Second Friday of the month, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.,
Commons



This no-gambling, no-pressure, open-to-anyone version of Mahjong makes its debut at Gary Church. Sign up at garychurch.org to get on the email list and let us know you're coming. (Game Night

with bridge, dominoes and other games you bring will continue on the fourth Friday of the month at 6:30 p.m.)

Men's Breakfast

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

All men are invited. RSVP at garychurch.org

New Young Adult Fellowship at Gary Church

Sundays, Sept. 13 and Oct. 4
after 11:11 a.m. worship, at Gary Church



All young adults are invited to a time of food and fellowship following our 11:11 a.m. worship experience. Meet and chat with the pastors and members of Gary Church while enjoying a free home-made meal. Come for the food, stay for the fellowship! Feel free to contact the Church Office or the pastors with any questions, but no RSVP is required.



Download the church app

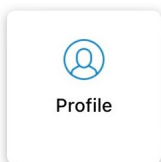


Having the Gary Church app makes registering your weekly attendance and Gary Kid's check in even simpler!

Download the app from your device's app store. It's called "Church by MinistryOne."

Once downloaded and opened, you will be asked to "Find Your Church." Type 'Gary United Methodist' or the zip code '60187' and select Gary United Methodist Church when it appears.

For full access to all the information available, please click on the Profile tile to sign in using your email and mobile phone number. (If your email and phone number do not match with the Church database, there may be a slight delay.) If you have problems signing in, please contact **Deb Evans** through the Church Office.



Once signed in, you will have the use of all the app's features including attendance. For Gary Kid's check in, you will now be able to check in on your way in and simply scan a QR code to print nametags.

The Gary Church app also puts the church calendar, directory, recordings, online giving, event sign ups and more at your fingertips. Download it today!

Stewardship *through legacy giving*

By **Jack Rozwat**

The Gary Church Endowment Committee has been hard at work to both refine the processes we use to manage current funds and to look at ways to increase endowed funds to help sustain and grow the church's mission and ministries.

During our lifetime, we know it's important to give of your time, talents, presence and treasures to the church. Legacy giving (often called planned giving) is a form of Christian stewardship where believers direct part of their estate to the church after their earthly life is over, as a reflection of their faith and a desire to make one final gift to their beloved church family.

There are many ways to plan an estate gift, but two of the simplest and most common are:

1. Include a gift to Gary Church in your will.
2. Add Gary Church as a beneficiary to a life insurance policy, IRA or a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF).

Legacy giving is rooted in the biblical truth that everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1) and we are stewards, not owners. Estate gifts also offer a great way to communicate your values to your children, grandchildren and friends/family, with an intent to grow their faith as well.

A great example of legacy giving can be traced back to the founders of our church, the Gary family. Did you know that the Garys created a trust/endowment as part of their last will and testament to ensure the future vitality of Gary Church? That estate gift is still a cornerstone of our current endowment funds.



As I retired in the last year, Lisa and I worked with a financial planner to consolidate many of our retirement assets. As part of that process, we added Gary Church as a designated beneficiary to all our retirement accounts and shared that with our kids. Our kids know Gary has been an important part of our family for 30+ years as they all grew up as part of the Gary family. This was a simple process to modify designated beneficiaries, and, in many ways, money donated from retirement accounts (especially pre-tax) are more valuable to a tax-exempt church than other beneficiaries.

You will hear more from the Endowment Committee over the next year about legacy giving. This will include information on the various effective ways to do this, along with the likely start of a legacy society to honor those who commit to make planned estate gifts.

If you have questions or suggestions about the church's endowment or legacy giving, feel free to reach out to any of the committee members – **Deb Evans** (church business administrator), **Jack Rozwat** (chair), **Ron Austin**, **Jane Bilezikian**, **James Morris**, **Cathy Mousseau**, **David Plate** and **Holly Trueblood**.

2027 Stewardship campaign

This fall, Gary Church will highlight stewardship and how we can use our gifts for listening, loving and leading. For an early look, go to the registrations page of garychurch.org and click on the following links:

- “Get Connected” – highlights ways you can share your spiritual gifts and physical talents.
- “Stewardship Campaign: Listening, Loving, Leading” – provides an opportunity to pledge your resources to support the mission and ministry of Gary Church for the 2027 fiscal year.

Hearts Full of Joy — and Hope

By **Cathy Mousseau**

On a sunny Sunday morning, **Judy and Katie Selby, Bonnie Wheaton** and I traveled to the south side of Chicago to witness firsthand the impact of Gary Church's *Educate a Girl / Change the World* mission. We were honored to join our newest partner, Third Baptist Church of Chicago, for its annual Baccalaureate Sunday.

Through the partnership between *Educate A Girl* and Third Baptist Church's Education Council, Janae Jackson and Sydni Morrison-Whiteside each received a \$2,500 scholarship, helping ease the financial burden of higher education as they pursue their dreams.

Janae, a senior at Illinois State University, is majoring in consumer science with a concentration in human and child development and minoring in psychology. She hopes to earn a master's degree and become a social worker serving children and families, with a long-term goal of working for a child welfare agency.

In her scholarship essay, Janae connected her Christian faith with her desire to serve others, writing, "Every child deserves the chance to learn, grow and reach their full potential. Every family deserves access to support and resources when they need help."

Sydni, a senior majoring in food and nutritional science, plans to continue her education by earning a master's degree at Loyola University. Her goal is to become a registered dietitian nutritionist.

Sydni's passion for serving others is reflected in her vision for the future: "My goal is to have a job where I can help people stay healthy and improve their lives through good nutrition. I want to make a positive impact by helping people live healthier."

Following the service, we gathered with Janae, Sydni, and Diane Cottrell, who leads Third Baptist's Education Council, for refreshments, conversation and fellowship. As we drove home that afternoon, our hearts were full of joy, gratitude and renewed inspiration. We were reminded that investing in young women helps shape stronger families, healthier communities and a brighter future.

To everyone at Gary Church: thank you. Because of your generous support of the *Educate a Girl* mission, young women like Janae and Sydni are pursuing their God-given callings and preparing for lives of service. One scholarship, one student, one life at a time, we truly are helping change the world.

Meet Natalie

By **Judy Selby**

Natalie Arguijo will begin her college education at Triton Community College this fall and would like to earn a degree in criminal justice. Natalie's Native heritage is Lakota and Salish Kootenai and she has been a member of American Indian Association Black Hawk Performance Company dance troupe for 14 years, starting as a very young child. Today she excels at creating and sewing her own dance regalia and sharing her skills with others. She is currently a summer intern at the American Indian Health Services of Chicago with the CIMC program.



Educate a Girl is pleased to support Natalie as she begins her college level education.

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





Shop sales for Christmas Sharing

Fall sales may be a good time to shop for the new children's coats Christmas Sharing will need – especially the larger sizes all the way up to adult XL. We will also be collecting and distributing clean, gently used adult coats.

On Saturday, Dec. 12 we will again work with six other churches across Wheaton to provide food, coats, toys and more to 750+ families in need across the District 200 community. We are again partnering with the Northern Illinois Food Bank and Toys for Tots.

We will need many volunteers as we distribute food, toys and coats – and host our guests with hospitality and love. Mark your calendar and look for the Angel Tree in November for needed donations of coats, toys, and cash contributions.

John Hart, Dan & Suzy Wible
Christmas Sharing co-chairs

Save the date: Cookie Walk

Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Commons



Joy Circle and United Women of Faith invite you to our third annual Christmas Cookie Walk. Over the past two years, we've raised more than \$12,000 to fund mission projects. Bring your friends and family and plan to fill your boxes with yummy home-made cookies: 3-pound box for \$35 or 1.5-pound box for \$20.

If you have a talent for baking beautiful cookies and wish to donate your favorites, we need your help! Please contact **Suzy Wible** or **Ida Whitcomb** through the Church Office.

Donate pop tabs

Did you know pop tabs amount to about \$40,000 for Ronald McDonald House? Gary Church recently donated 12.5 gallons of pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House in Winfield. The tabs are sold to metal collectors, and the cash goes into the general fund of the house. Keep collecting, and drop off your pop tabs in the box under the Missions bulletin board.

Mary Landreth



Thank you

For decades, members of Mary-Martha Circle have contributed funds and volunteer hours to missions and ministries like Christmas Sharing, Outreach, Radical Time Out (RTO), ESSE, People's Resource Center, JUST of DuPage, Educate a Girl, Fundaniños Guatemala orphanage, Vacation Bible School and more. The members have laughed and cried together, brought in speakers, shared favorite books, created cards and lasting memories. Although the circle voted to disband this year, many members plan to join other circles and remain active at Gary Church. Thank you to Mary-Martha Circle for your dedication to faith, fellowship and service.



Hey Families!

A new ministry year is beginning, bringing fresh opportunities to gather, connect and grow in faith together. As we settle into the rhythms of fall, we hope you'll find meaningful ways for your family to deepen your relationships – with one another and with God. Blessings, and see you Sunday.

what we're learning

September Series: Lead the Way

In the jungle, every day is an unpredictable adventure! But to safely navigate the vines, animals and tricky terrain, we'll need a guide to help lead us. This series follows the life of Moses and his journey to leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Through his story, we'll discover how God teaches us how to lead and learn how to follow God's lead.



October Series: Are We There Yet?

Can you imagine needing to walk through the desert? With the heat of the sun, we'd wind up so thirsty and wondering "Are we there yet?" That's probably how the Israelites felt as they wandered around the desert, waiting to enter the Promised Land. But no matter how tired our feet get, we can focus on what's happening in our lives right now rather than just on where we're going. Based on stories from Exodus, we'll explore how we can choose to be thankful, love God and others, turn to God when we're lost, go to God when we need rest and remember God's promises.



what's happening

Kickoff Sunday Sunday, Sept. 13

New this year: Kids' Church at 9 a.m. and 11:11 a.m. worship will welcome preschool 3s through third grade, plus fourth and fifth graders every Sunday. We look forward to Sunday School for all ages at 10 a.m. Be sure to complete a Gary Kids registration form at garychurch.org and join us each week to grow in faith.

Third Grade Bible

Sundays, Sept. 13–Nov. 8, 10 a.m.
during Sunday School

On Sunday, Sept. 13, Gary Church will give every third grader a Bible. Our Third Grade Bible class will help students become more familiar with their new Bible. We pray children come to realize more fully the importance of the Bible as an integral part of their life.





Connect

Wednesdays

Sept. 30, Oct. 21 and Nov. 18, 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m.



Looking for a night where your kids will be cared for – and, honestly, you too? Connect is a new ministry creating space for families to come together, share a meal and build meaningful relationships. After dinner together, kids will enjoy Bible-based crafts, games, music and more, while parents gather for guided conversation about the joys and challenges of raising a family.

Come for dinner. Stay for connection.
Register at garychurch.org.

Family (Day) Camp

Saturday, Oct. 17, 3 p.m.–7 p.m.

Herrick Lake Forest Preserve



Love Family Camp – or want to see what all the fun is about? Family (Day) Camp brings an afternoon of outdoor fun, faith and connection right here at home! Families can fish, hike, play games, or simply hang out before coming together for a potluck cookout and “Family Camp” worship. Bring your lawn chairs, a side dish to share and s’more sticks for a fall afternoon of nature, nurture and play. Register at garychurch.org.



Ice Cream Social

Friday, Sept. 20, 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

Fourth and fifth graders are invited to an ice cream social featuring games, fun and friends! RSVP to **Carey Williams Bebar** at cbebar@garychurch.org.



Get Air Trampoline Park

Friday, Oct. 2, 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

To quote a ‘90s classic, “Jump up, jump up and get down!” Kids can meet at, and get picked up from, Get Air (2010 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove). Parents will need to complete the waiver at garychurch.org. Suggested donation of \$10 per person.



Camp Gary

Friday, Sept. 25, Friday, Oct. 9 and Monday, Nov. 2, at Gary Church for Preschool 3s-5th grade

Full Day: 9 a.m.–2 p.m. (Campers will need to bring their own lunch)

Half Day: 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Looking for something fun for your kids to do on their day off from school? Activities will include games, stories, songs, crafts, snacks and fun time hanging out with friends. And, for parents and caretakers, you’ll have access to a quiet workspace stocked with coffee and donuts. Suggested donation: \$20 per child per date. Register at garychurch.org.



Gary Kids Participation Form 2026-2027

Each year, parents and guardians are required to complete a form for their child/ren to participate in Gary Kids activities. Go to garychurch.org to fill out the form.



Gary Youth

Supporting Our Youth, Together

One of the greatest strengths of Gary Church's youth ministry is that it is not built around one person — it is built around a community of caring adults and students who share a passion for helping young people grow in their faith. Last year, a Youth Council was re-formed to work with the youth director.

The Youth Council plays an important role in supporting both the youth ministry and the director of youth ministry. Made up of dedicated adult and youth volunteers from our congregation, the council provides guidance, encouragement, ideas and hands-on support for programs, events and service opportunities throughout the year. Their shared commitment helps create a welcoming environment where youth can build relationships, ask questions, serve others and deepen their faith.

As Gary Church searches for our next director of youth ministry, the Youth Council has an opportunity to partner with our church staff to help ensure that youth ministry continues to thrive. Together, they will work to maintain meaningful programs, foster connections among our students and provide consistency during this transition. We are grateful for the members of the Youth Council who generously give their time, talents and hearts to serve our youth. Their leadership reflects our mission to grow in joyful faith and serve all in love.

We are also looking for additional adult volunteers to work with the youth ministry, in whatever capacity you can. Please let us know if you would like to discuss how you can help.

Charlie Castino, Youth Chair
Larry Blackburn, Adult Chair

Weekly Gathering

We play games and engage the Bible using theme-based discussions.

Middle School

*Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.
starting Sept. 16*

High School

*Sundays, 6-7:30 p.m.
starting Sept. 13*

Sunday School

*10-11 a.m., Middle School
and High School Rooms,
starting Sept. 13*

Confirmation Class 2026–2027

Sept. 13, 2026 – May 16, 2027

What a joy to celebrate the start of another confirmation program year at Gary Church! Our 8th graders will meet Sunday mornings to explore their faith in God, enrich their understanding of the Bible, and learn about the history and structure of The United Methodist Church. Confirmands will also take field trips, meet regularly with a confirmation sponsor, serve in worship, and participate in youth retreats and mission activities. **Pastor Daniel Cochran** invites the whole congregation to pray for our confirmands, their families and their sponsors, that they might have a meaningful experience that deepens their relationship with God and their neighbors.

Gary Youth Participation Form 2026–2027

Each year, parents and guardians are required to complete a form for their child/ren to participate in Gary Youth activities. Go to garychurch.org to fill out the form.



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).

2026 NIC Youth Fall Retreat

Friday, Sept. 25-Sunday, Sept. 27, Camp Timber-lee, East Troy, WI

Gary Youth, grades 6-12, can look forward to joining other students throughout the Northern Illinois Conference for three modern worship and teaching sessions, small-group discussions, devotional time, two campfires and a variety of activities including fishing, zip-lining, axe throwing and access to the science center, creating a fun and faith-filled weekend of connection, adventure, and spiritual growth. Cost: \$180, with a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Sign up at garychurch.org.



Some of our Youth activities this summer



BLAST Camp



A fun stop during the Summer Mission Trip



Great America

Share job posting

Gary Church has a full-time opening for a director of youth ministry. View the job description and apply at garychurch.org. Please consider sharing the job posting on LinkedIn.

Donate/sign up for college care gifts

If you know of a college student who would love a pick-me-up from Gary Church this semester, please share their name and address at garychurch.org by *Friday, Oct. 9*. And, if you'd like to donate money toward the cost of goodies and postage, please go to garychurch.org/give or contact the Church Office.

New publication(s) alert

In an effort to give you the Gary Church news important to you, we plan to add a monthly women's and monthly men's e-news to our communications. We'll plan to email these publications on the first of the month, *September through May*. These articles will be due a week before the first of the month and will be focused on women's and men's groups. Send an email with your article to **Janet Mathis**, jmathis@garychurch.org. We will continue with the weekly e-news on Wednesdays for all-church news.

Write a Google review



As more people use AI technology to search for churches, the algorithm uses reviews from other sites to determine which churches it will present. Please consider writing a review about Gary Church on Google and other sites. To leave a Google review, sign into your Google account and search for Gary United Methodist Church on Google or Google Maps. Click on the Reviews link, select your star rating, and type your feedback.

Getting to Know Robert Sacks

Gary Church has appreciated Robert Sacks' beautiful organ and piano music in worship over the past several weeks. Robert brings decades of experience as a performer, collaborative pianist, chamber musician, educator and organist, holding degrees from the Peabody Conservatory and Syracuse University. Enjoy reading excerpts of Joshua Velez's interview with Robert:

Robert, welcome to Gary Church! To start, could you tell us about your early years in music?

I have a picture my mother took of me at a piano when I was five. Music was always my thing as a child. My childhood teacher taught me from age seven until I studied with Walter Hautzig at Peabody. He was able to draw poetry out of the music in his students, not letting them just play loud and fast. He taught me how to blend being a teacher and a performer.



How did you get into church music?

In 2012, a family friend asked, rather pointedly, "Have you ever thought about playing organ in a church?" It hadn't even crossed my mind until then, but I gave it a try as a favor to her. The response I got was so positive that I thought, "I want to keep doing this, contributing to people's spiritual lives through my musical skills."

What do you find unique about making music in worship?

I get more immediate feedback and a collective energy you share in the moment with the congregation. I try to play with joy, because I feel a real sense of joy myself – I feel lucky to get to do this.

Do you have a favorite hymn?

Lasst uns erfreuen, the tune we sing as our Doxology at Gary (also commonly sung to "All creatures of our God and King"). The Vaughan Williams arrangement in our hymnal is just epic!

Tell us about your chamber group, the Spectrum Trio.

My wife is the violinist, so that part was easy! The cellist is a lifelong friend of hers. We talked him into moving to Chicago in the late '80s to join us. As a chamber musician, I love collaborative music-making that echoes the values of democracy – arriving at an interpretation through consensus is powerful.

On top of all this, you're also the Clerk of Lisle Township! What does that job involve?

I've been involved in local politics since 2013, and people eventually urged me to run for Township Clerk. I'm the official

documentarian for the Township, keeping records, minutes, helping with digitization projects. Musicians tend to be organized and good at prioritizing, which serves me well there too.

Tell us about your family.

I have two adult sons on the autism spectrum. My older son is profoundly autistic and minimally verbal, but he's a great lover of music. Because of him, we go to concerts often as a family. My younger son is high functioning, has a job and a girlfriend, and sings in the Naperville Men's Glee Club. My wife and I just celebrated our

40th anniversary!

I'm also a recent stroke survivor, so I'm grateful every day to be here. I want to be an inspiration to others, and to advocate for other families in the disability community, which I do in part by volunteering

with Community Access Naperville.



What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I love watching lacrosse! I used to play when I was young. I also worked for several years as a municipal bond analyst until after moving to Naperville in the late '80s. I think I found my calling instead, getting to do what I love and hopefully bringing joy to people who listen.

Is there music you particularly enjoy outside of work and church?

My car radio is tuned to WXRT – I love rock. The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, the Rolling Stones, Foo Fighters, Pearl Jam. I also have a real fondness for Bolivian folk music, which I first heard on a trip to Bonn, Germany. It was the most amazing thing to hear, and to see, too.

Lastly, what hopes do you have for your time here at Gary Church?

I want to feel like I can support the church through my music, and that I have the support of the church in return. I've already felt that here, and it's the kind of situation I want to stay in for a long time.

Reflections on Northern Illinois Annual Conference 2026

The theme, "Practicing Hope," set the tone for a productive and uplifting gathering of United Methodist clergy and lay members. Nine representatives from Gary Church attended the 187th session of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference led by Bishop Dan Schwerin.

Highlights include:



- Bishop Schwerin's address in which he spoke about our faith offering us refuge when we need a place to build up internal and external strength when feeling overwhelmed.
- Celebration of the 70th anniversary of women's ordination with full clergy rights; the 50th anniversary of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission; the 40th anniversary of NIC becoming a Reconciling Ministries Network Conference; and the 30th anniversary of the Order of Deacons.
- The Bible study sessions based on Romans 5:3-5: "And not only that but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."
- Social justice report about United Methodist leaders supporting immigrants' legal and spiritual needs.

Bobbi Wheatley summed up her experience of attending her second conference, "The conference really opened my eyes to the depth and breadth of what our church is doing, and it is awesome! I am grateful to be a United Methodist and now to get my feet on the ground to do more!"

Phyllis Geyer wants to convey to our congregation the powerful theme of "Practicing Hope" and that we need to continue to be courageous in our practice of hope.

For more detailed information about the conference, please see umcnic.org/ac2026. Representatives from Gary Church: **Rev. Mary Zajac, Carey Williams Bebar, Karen Binkerd, Phyllis Geyer, Rev. Barb Good, Rev. Dwight Stewart, Steve Novy, Fred Wayland, Bobbi Wheatley.**



We have recently replaced the Main Street and Courtyard exterior doors as well as the Main Street sign.

We are also having some minor repairs to some of the Chapel and Sanctuary windows.

In addition, work to install a new first floor bathroom in the Wesley Center is scheduled to start in September. I also want to give a big thank you to **Rick Vincent** and all the Gary Gardeners for the new plantings around the building.

Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Trustees if you have questions.

David Plate
Board of Trustees Chair



old vs. new



Gary's GREEN TEAM

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. Psalm 24:1

New at Gary: Re-energized recycling

In the recently completed carbon footprint analysis of our main church building and the Wesley Center, the Green Team learned that what we send to the landfill has a definite impact. As a result, Gary Church now has a more streamlined, coordinated waste disposal, with recycling containers now throughout the main church building and Wesley Center.

The blue recycling containers are available for the same things that you can recycle curbside at home in Wheaton – paper, glass, metal, juice/drink cartons, hard plastic containers. Look for the LRS flyer on each recycling can for specifics. Don't put Styrofoam in the new containers – see below.

Everything else should go into waste containers for landfill disposal. The cans will be emptied into one of the two landfill dumpsters or the one recycling dumpster in the South Driveway enclosure. Look for the signs on the enclosure doors if you are putting something in the dumpster yourself. No plastic bags should go into the recycling dumpster.



Recycle Styrofoam

Sunday, Oct. 18, 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.

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

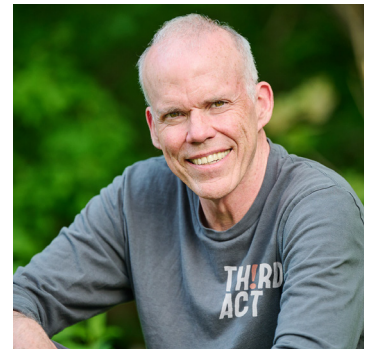
Environment & Spirituality Summit livestream

Tuesday, Sept. 29, doors open at 5:30 p.m.,
livestream starts at 6 p.m., Anderson Room

You're invited to a watch party! Gary Church is livestreaming Bill McKibben's keynote talk from Faith in Place's 2026 Environment & Spirituality Summit.

The Summit's theme, Grounded Resistance, explores how we engage the world from a place of deep grounding, collective support and sustained resistance. McKibben is an author, educator and environmentalist who helped found 350.org, the first global grass-roots climate campaign, and recently founded Third Act, an organizing movement for people over 60. Drawing on decades of organizing, writing and movement-building, he'll ground the Summit in the moral and spiritual stakes of the climate crisis and invite communities of faith to harness their collective power to confront fossil fuel reliance and advance climate justice.

The watch party is free, and all are welcome – invite friends! Learn more about the Summit and register to join at garychurch.org.



GROUNDING RESISTANCE

Join Our Watch Party

for the 2026
Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit

September 29, 2026

Featuring Keynote Speaker
Bill McKibben

REGISTER TO JOIN
www.aes-summit.org

September and October birthdays*

Happy (90+) birthday to:

Charlotte Murphy
Jim Carsten
Sally Hill
Ann Orr
Joan Zarembski

September and October anniversaries*

Happy anniversary (50+) to:

Bob & Carol Barnes
Bob & Diane Martin
John & Donna Hamilton
Reg & Barb Heeley
George & Rose King

Congratulations!

Chuck and Cubby Minauskas on the birth of their great-grandson, Stetson, on May 26.

Nancy Turner on the birth of her great-granddaughter, Romy Turner Sims, on June 30.

Our sympathy

Jim and Jan Aellig on the death of Jan's sister, Mary Rowell, on June 14.

Beth, Andy, Annabelle, Zachary, Ethan and Hannah Tobias on the death of Beth's brother, Chris Berzac, on June 15.

Mark, Carson and Cameron Rewiski on the death of their wife and mother, Heather, on June 24.

John, Kim, Wyatt and Grant Olson on the death of John's father, Walter Robert Olson, on June 29.

Reg and Barbara Heeley on the death of Reg's sister, Phyllis Walsh, on June 29.

Gary and Carol Ourada, David and Kristina Ourada and Lisa and Cameron Nixon and their families on the death of Carol's mother, Virginia Cook, on July 3.

Marta Witte, Emily and Dan Kurowski and family and Grant Witte on the death of their husband and father, Len Witte, on July 21.

Holly Trueblood on the death of her sister-in-law, Joyce Richardson, on July 28

Deb Hafner on the death of her uncle, Lorrin Schwartz, on July 28

The family of former Gary member, Anne Courter. Anne passed away on July 28.

New opportunity

Brian Skaj on his move to Mount Prospect.

Thank you

Your lovely handmade card arrived on a day when I really needed a lift – and you gave it to me!

I miss being physically close to you all but knowing that I am not forgotten makes it a bit easier to just see you online on Sunday mornings. As I looked at the signatures, many of them brought back happy memories. Thank you, everyone.

Blessings with love,
Lorrie Brand

As I reflect on my time at Gary Church, I am deeply grateful for the way this congregation welcomed my family and me into the community in 2020. It has been a true honor and privilege to serve alongside such dedicated pastors, staff, volunteers and church members.



To the parents of Gary Youth, thank you for trusting me to walk alongside your children in their faith journeys. It has been a responsibility I have never taken lightly. And to the students of Gary Youth: thank you for the joy and privilege of serving as your youth pastor. Watching you grow in faith, ask big questions, build meaningful friendships and discover how God is at work in your lives has been one of my greatest blessings. My prayer for each of you is that you always know how deeply God loves you, how much your church family loves you, and that you continue to share that love with others wherever God leads you.

Dan Lee

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

Pet Blessing Sunday

October 4, 3 p.m., Courtyard

See page 5 for details

