



SULLIVAN FIRST



MESSENGER

JANUARY 2026

Reverend J. Mike Smith



Mike is a retired UMC pastor with over fifty years of pastoral experience in local churches. He has served in numerous conference leadership roles through the years. After retiring in 2020, he has been appointed by three different bishops to serve several churches that needed short term, transformative leadership. In addition, he has developed an innovative and experimental program for churches wanting to turn their stories around, "Working the Map," and has five churches currently engaged in that. Mike is a part time professional (certified) tour guide for Chicago. He writes a regular blog, speaks at conferences, has published a book of humorous/reflective essays titled "Teaching the Preacher to Curse." His wife Jie (pronounced like the letter "J") is the pastor of the Mansfield United Methodist Church. They have three daughters and four grandchildren. Mike's mother lives in an assisted living facility in Pana, Illinois. For hobbies he enjoys reading, writing, gardening, map collecting, presidential biographies, tennis, cooking, and traveling. He does not enjoy exercising, but does it three times a week anyway. His current writing projects include a book on economics for churches, a biblical commentary on Matthew, and a novel titled "Nine Old Men." But those writing will all be on hold while he is serving the Sullivan First UMC.

SUPPORT FOR THE CONFINED AND IMMOBILE

Below are those who are unable to attend our Sunday services, but we can be a lifeline that reminds them they're deeply valued. Please consider reaching out to them with a visit, a phone call, a prayer, or send a card.

Shelbyville Manor: 1111 W. North 12th St. Shelbyville, IL 62565

Fred Davis

Mary Storm

Green Gardens: 601 W. North St, Sullivan, IL 61951

Jeretta Hecht

Darlene Brown

Heritage Woods: 20 Courtyard Blvd, Sullivan, IL 61951

Beverly DeVore

Shirlene Cole

Sullivan Health Care: 11 Hawthorne Lane, Sullivan, IL 61951

Darlene Standerfer

At Home:

**Bob & Phylis Maxedon, 11 Eastview Drive, Sullivan, IL
61951**

Diane Strufe, 316 S 17th St., Apt 1A, Mattoon, IL 61938

**Odd Fellow Rebekah Home, 201 Lafayette Ave. E., Mattoon, IL
61938**

Joan Highland

2026 Church Council:

Bill Workman, (chair)	Kathy Booker
Susan Connor	Bob Lane
Chip Hagen	Yvonne Workman
Erica Lehman	Dennis Ozier
Kendall Brettschneider	Trevor Poe
David Sowers	Lois Shuman
Karen Reed	Pastor J. Michael Smith (ex officio)

Officers of the Church

Lay member of AC: Kathy Booker

Lay Leader: Susan Connor

Finance Chair and Treasurer: Bob Lane

Staff-Parish Relations Chair: Bob Lane

Trustee Chair: Chip Hagen

Financial Secretary: Yvonne Workman

Communications: Yvonne Workman

Recording Secretary: Yvonne Workman

Representative of specialized ministries on the Church Council:

UWF: Susan Connor

UMM: Dennis Ozier

Trustees

Class of 2026: Chip Hagen (chair)

Class of 2027: Trevor Poe (first year)

Class of 2028: David Sowers (first year)

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Lay Leader: Susan Connor

Lay Member of Annual Conference: Kathy Booker

Class of 2026: Bob Lane (chair) (first year)

Class of 2027: Erica Lehman (first year)

Class of 2028: Dennis Ozier & Kendall Brettschneider (first year for each)

Nominations and Leadership Development

Pastor: J. Michael Smith (chair)

Lay Leader: Susan Connor

Class of 2026: Yvonne Workman

Class of 2027: Lois Shuman, Karen Reed

Class of 2028: Erica Lehman

Finance Committee

Pastor: J. Michael Smith

Finance Chair/SPRC/Treasurer: Bob Lane (chair)

Lay Member of AC: Kathy Booker

Council Chair: Bill Workman

Trustee: Chip Hagen

Lay Leader: Susan Connor

Finance Secretary: Yvonne Workman

WHICH EMAIL DO I USE?

JMS754@gmail.com—To reach Pastor Mike Smith

office@sullivanfirstumc.com – To reach the office for any questions, prayer requests, general information.

admin@sullivanfirstumc.com – To inquire about facility usage, also CC the office email as well.

adminassistant@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you to Esther Nelson. Use this email if you wish something to be included in the newsletter or any other questions regarding the newsletter.

sfumcfinance@yahoo.com – This will get you Yvonne Workman. Use this email for anything finance related. If you have questions about contributions, small group budget balances, need reimbursement forms, or anything ordered.

finance@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Bob Lane. This is the email for the Finance Chair of the Administrative Council. Contact Bob if you have questions about the budget, including potential expenditure.

adboardchair@sullivanfirstumc.com — This will get you Bill Workman. If you have any issues, you feel need to be brought before the Administrative Council, reach out to Bill.

childrens@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Alex Poe. If you have any questions regarding the children's Sunday program, reach out to her.

nurture@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Kathy Booker and Melissa Krieger. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions for in-house events for our congregation. If you have concerns for a member, please let them know as well as our office and pastor.

education@sullivanfirstumc.com— This will get you Sue Weaver. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about our children's lectionary.

outreach@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Yvonne Workman. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions for community events, please email this account.

communications@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Yvonne Workman. If you need anything advertised on the sign, internet, website, Facebook page, Sunday slides, and paper, please send it to this email.

trustees@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Chip Hagan. Chip has oversight and care of the local church property, buildings, and equipment.

layleader@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Susan Connor. If you have questions about worship, ministries and protocols, reach out to Susan.

laymember@sullivanfirstumc.com – This will get you Kathy Booker. If you have questions or comments about the Annual conference, reach out to Kathy.

sprc@sullivanfirstumc.com—This will get you Bob Lane. If you have any questions about staff positions or job openings or descriptions.

“Membership Class” Update

Membership Class will begin meeting Wednesday, January 7th, 2026. We will meet in the old choir room off the main sanctuary at 6:00 pm. Class is open to anyone interested in joining our church or inquiring about what membership in the United Methodist Church means. I encourage any members who want a refresher course to join us. Facilitator will be Susan Connor, long time member of UMC, Lay leader of SFUMC and Certified Lay Servant.



NURSERY ATTENDANT: 9:00-10:30 AM every Sunday.

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR: We are seeking those who would like to consider or be considered for the position of Administrative Coordinator for the church. Many of you know this position as the ‘Office Manager’. If you are interested in learning more about the job, please stop by the office and pick up a job description or contact Bob Lane via email at sprc@sullivanfirstumc.com.

Would you like to
VOLUNTEER



Have you ever thought about being an Usher or a Greeter for a Sunday Service? If so, contact Elaine Daniels. We have a need for more volunteers.

If you have the time and are called to help with any events, send an email to communications@sullivanfirstumc.com to be added to a volunteer list. You can pick which events and how you would like to help. Any and all help is truly appreciated and helps our events to be successful!

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Peter 4:10



EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

JANUARY 2026

Monthly:

First Sunday	Communion
First Monday	United Women in Faith, Blessings Room, 1:00
Third Monday	E.I.U. Food Bank, 11:00 AM—12:00PM, In the parking lot.

Weekly:

Monday	Wings, Choir Room, 6:30
Tuesday	Walking with Jesus, 9:00
Tuesday	Women's Life Group, 9:00
Wednesday	Joy Group, Blessings Room, 4:30
Wednesday	Gals in Grace, <u>(currently paused)</u>
Thursday	Mary's Food Bags, Kitchen area

Additional Dates

January 11th	Welcome the new pastor soup luncheon after second service.
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2026 CALENDAR

JANUARY

4th 1 service
11th Welcome new pastor
soup luncheon

JULY (cont.)

20th-24th Vacation Bible
School
26th VBS Service—1 service

FEBRUARY

8th Scout Sunday —1
service
17th Shrove Tuesday

AUGUST

16th Back to School Bash—1
service

MARCH

8th 1 service
15th Set up UWF Easter Eggs
16th—27th UWF Egg
Preparation
29th Palm Sunday

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

4th World Communion
11th Pastor Appreciation
Sunday
17th Fall Festival
30th Safe Trick or Treat

APRIL

2nd Maundy Thursday
3rd Good Friday—Easter Egg
Hunt
5th Easter Sunday

NOVEMBER

4th-6th General Election Poling
Place
8th Veteran's Day
slideshow
22nd Thanksgiving Dinner—
1 service

MAY

10th Mother's Day
17th Graduation—1 service
24th Memorial Day slideshow

DECEMBER

4th Caroling
6th Jesus' birthday party
11th UWF Bake Sale
13th Christmas Program—1
service
18th Blue Christmas
24th Christmas Eve service
28th 1 service

JUNE

21st Father's Day—1 service
in Wyman Park

JULY

4th 4th of July Parade
School



JANET RONEY



World War II Years

Our fifty-fourth pastor was Rev. Stanley Ward who served from 1940 to 1943. He was born in London, England in 1879 and was just 3 years old when his parents came to the USA and settled in Chicago. He graduated from Northwestern University and Boston Schools of Theology, married, and had three girls and a son, Greig.

World War II started during his ministry in Sullivan, and he led our church members in supporting the war effort via blood drives, scrap drives, and supporting our many young men who volunteered to serve or were drafted.

One of our young members, Howard Murray, was the first Sullivan citizen to die during the war in 1942 when his plane went down at Pensacola during a training flight. Howard's father, Hugh, was the Sunday School Superintendent, and his mother, Nellie, and sister, Carol, were the nursery and primary Sunday School teachers when I was a child.

The second Sullivan citizen to die in World War II was Rev. Stanley Ward's own son, Greig, who was the pilot of a B-24 bomber that was shot down over the Solomon Islands by a Japanese Zero in July, 1943, shortly after Rev. Ward was transferred to Auburn, Illinois. The bodies of Lt. Greig Ward and his 9 other crew mates were never recovered.

He left a wife and two month old baby girl.

I don't remember Rev. Ward, but he was the pastor who baptized me as an infant sometime in 1942, along with most of the young people I grew up with in the church. He and his wife, Nellie, are buried in Bloomington, IL.

The next pastor after Rev. Ward was Rev. Lewis S. Ellison, a native of Vandalia, Illinois. The conference archives record of him says he served just one year from 1943 to 1944. His parents were Methodists, but he joined the United Brethren Church for a while and was first licensed to preach by them. After his marriage, he switch to the Methodists and was received into the Illinois Conference. He eventually graduated from the Garrett Biblical Institute in 1914.

Rev. Ellison preached a total of thirty years, including his term at Sullivan, his last pastorate. After Sullivan, he became a fund raiser for Illinois Wesleyan University. "His belief in the stewardship of possessions made it natural and easy for him to approach people for gifts of money for kingdom purposes with the same confidence he would seek Sunday School teachers or members for his Official Boards. His years with the Wesleyan were fruitful ones and he made many steadfast friends for the institution."

The archive record of him also described him as a successful pastor. "He never lost contact with young people." He died at age 74 in 1949 in an auto-train accident in Springfield.



HAPPY
Anniversary!

5 Dennis & Judy Ozier



2	Kyle Blakey	11	Merll Connor
	Dennis Ozier		Elise Flemming
4	Adalyn Cruitt		Esther Nelson
5	Donna Arendell	12	Hallie Bertetto
	Jacob White	22	Lilly Graham
6	Susan Connor	23	Gianna Krieger
7	Sharon Devall		Jeff White
	Joan Highland	28	JoAnn Pryor
8	Mackinze Price	30	Ben Berner
9	Hank Monroe		Ron Weaver
10	Lorelai Hoss		



CHURCH ATTENDANCE MATTERS

ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY	DEC. 7	# 94 * 497 views on fb
SUNDAY	DEC. 14	#108
THURSDAY	DEC. 18	# 8
SUNDAY	DEC. 21	#108 *351 views on fb
SUNDAY	DEC. 24	# 8 * No count from 1st service
SUNDAY	DEC. 28	#123

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From the Finance office....

The budget for this current year was set at \$415,368. To date, we have spent a total of \$355,901.35 and taken in tithes of \$370,832.48. With remaining costs for the rest of 2025 and current average tithes coming in, pending no large, unexpected costs, we are set to complete the year without having to dip into reserves. Our expenses have been lower, due to job openings and revised and re-evaluated spending.



SULLIVAN FIRST UMC

SMALL GROUPS

Salt of the Earth	Joe Pound	217-454-0488
Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups	Pastor Mike	217-728-4436
Wings	Mary Ann Hecht	217-972-5481
Walking with Jesus	Merl Connor	217-259-8208
Women's Life Group	Susan Connor	217-259-1679
Young Men's Group	Pastor Mike	217-728-4436
Joy Group	Ann Wheeler	217-273-0789

MINISTRY

Melissa Krieger, Nurture	nurture@sullivanfirstumc.com
Kathy Booker, Nurture	nurture@sullivanfirstumc.com
Yvonne Workman, Outreach	outreach@sullivanfirstumc.com
MacKenzie Hoss, Grace & Grow	graceandgrow@sullivanfirstumc.com
Kendall Brettschneider, Gals in Grace	galsingrace@sullivanfirstumc.com
Sue Weaver, Education	education@sullivanfirstumc.com

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Administrative Board Chair, Bill Workman	adboardchair@sullivanfirstumc.com
Finance Committee, Bob Lane (chair)	finance@sullivanfirstumc.com
United Women in Faith, Susan Connor	uwf@sullivanfirstumc.com
United Methodist Men, Dennis Ozier	mensgroup@sullivanfirstumc.com
Lay Leader, Susan Connor	layleader@sullivanfirstumc.com
Lay Member, Kathy Booker	laymember@sullivanfirstumc.com
SPRC, Bob Lane (chair)	sprc@sullivanfirstumc.com
Trustees, Chip Hagan (chair)	trustees@sullivanfirstumc.com
Financial Secretary, Yvonne Workman	financesecretary@sullivanfirstumc.com
Recording Secretary, Yvonne Workman	recordingsecretary@sullivanfirstumc.com
Communications, Yvonne Workman	communications@sullivanfirstumc.com
Nominations, Pastor Smith (chair)	nominations@sullivanfirstumc.com

STAFF

Rev. Mike Smith, Pastor	jms754@gmail.com
Office	office@sullivanfirstumc.com
Ad. Min	admin@sullivanfirstumc.com
Esther Nelson, Admin	adminassistant@sullivanfirstumc.com
Yvonne Workman, Finance	sfumcfinance@yahoo.com
Music	music@sullivanfirstumc.com
Nursery	nursery@sullivanfirstumc.com

VOLUNTEER STAFF

Alex Poe, Children	childrens@sullivanfirstumc.com
Teresa Lane, Worship Arts	worshiparts@sullivanfirstumc.com

Office Hours: Monday—Friday 9:00AM—1:00PM

Phone: 217-728—4436

Address: 216 W. Jefferson St., Sullivan, IL 61951

Www.sullivanfirstumc.com