

FEBRUARY 2026

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
610 BONUS AVE
BELVIDERE, IL
61008



FUMC Courier



Belvidere First
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
LOVIN' JESUS LOVIN' YOU

February Newsletter

Back to the Center

A month of the New Year has already passed, and we now find ourselves stepping into February. The sense of new beginnings that felt so strong in January can already feel distant. For some of us, the plans and resolutions we made with hope may no longer feel intact. Old rhythms return, responsibilities pile up, and life moves forward at a pace that leaves little room to pause. It can be discouraging to realize how quickly our good intentions fade.

Yet this is precisely the reality we bring before God—not our success, but our dependence. We come relying on the One who invites us to approach the throne of grace, driven by a deep need to seek the Lord. It is into this space that Lent arrives, beginning in the middle of this month. Lent does not come as a demand to do better or try harder. Instead, it comes as a gentle invitation: to stop, to reflect, and to return. It reminds us that faith is not sustained by willpower alone, but by continually re-centering our lives on God.

This season calls us to slow down in a world that constantly urges us to hurry. It invites us to listen more carefully—to God, to our own hearts, and to what truly matters. As we practice prayer, silence, and self-examination, we begin to notice how easily our lives drift away from their true center. Lent offers us the grace to realign, not through perfection, but through repentance and attentiveness.

“Back to the Center” is not about starting over from scratch. It is about turning our hearts again toward God in the midst of our everyday lives. As we journey through this Lenten season together, may we rediscover what grounds us, restores us, and gently guides us back to the One who remains faithful, even when we lose our way.

As we begin this Lenten journey, we invite you to join us for our Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 18, in the evening. This service marks the beginning of Lent—a sacred moment to pause, to remember our dependence on God, and to return our hearts to God. Through prayer, Scripture, and the imposition of ashes, we will begin this season together, seeking God and re-centering our lives in God's grace.

“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.”

Isaiah 55:6 (NIV)

See you at Church,
Pastor Jay

Check out these books from our church library in February!

For Kids: *The Story of the Lost Sheep* by Allan

For Women: *With Glad and Generous Hearts* by Willimon

For Men: *Major United Methodist Beliefs* by Stokes



Our prayer team is always ready to pray for you, or someone you know. If you have a prayer request, please contact Karen Frazer @ 815-985-7970, or contact the Church office at 815-544-3479.



Ash Wednesday
— Lent Begins

Ash Wednesday Worship

The season of Lent begins on February 18 with Ash Wednesday. We remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. We remember that we are sinful and unable to get it right on our own. And we commit to seeking God during the 40 days (plus Sundays) leading up to Easter. This year we are asking that all the people of First Church would seek God's call on your life and also perhaps speak to you about God's will for our church. Please also pray that God would speak through others here to guide our future.

Join us at 6:30pm for worship with the imposition of ashes, and let's seek God together this Lent.



Active Military

Do you have a family member serving in the military?

Please contact Ruth Bower, and let us know so we can be encouraging and praying for them. Here is what we need:

- Name of active family member and their relationship to you
- Branch of military
- Location serving
- Address to send correspondence

Hospitality Team

Matthew 10: 40-42 “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Would you like to meet and greet visitors to our church? Then our Hospitality Team (Greeters & Ushers) may be the place for you. Contact the church office at 815-544-3479 for more information, if you feel God nudging you towards this team.



SAVE THE DATE

THAT DESSERT *Thing*



SUNDAY, APRIL 12

2-4:30 PM

proceeds support Camp Rock Forward

United Women in Faith

Board Meeting

February 6th 1pm in the Adult
Classroom

There will not be a general meeting



United
Women
in Faith

SOUPER BOWL SUPPER!



The FUMC Ambassadors Team is hosting a **"Souper Bowl" Supper!**

Wednesday, February 4
4:30 to 6:30



A few days before Super Bowl LX, please join us in Perry Hall for a **FREE** community **fellowship meal** of homemade soups and more. Bring your family, invite your friends and neighbors, and help spread the word!

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people." (Acts 2:46-47)



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fumcbelvidere.org



Care Notes

Care Notes are small booklets offering strength, help, and healing for a variety of topics that impact everyday lives at a very personal level. They are free to those who are hurting and in need of them.

Topics range from overcoming everyday anxiety to dealing with depression, abuse, grief, financial stress, addictions, dementia, and suicide. There are booklets for children, teens, and adults. Check out the **Care Notes** rack in the main hall just outside the office.

February Greeter

Schedule

February 1 Joe & Eunice Beckman
February 8 Mara Baer
February 15 Bundschuh Family
February 22 Kazy-Garey Family

February Ushers

Curt Newport
Tammie Bahling
Rich Bahling

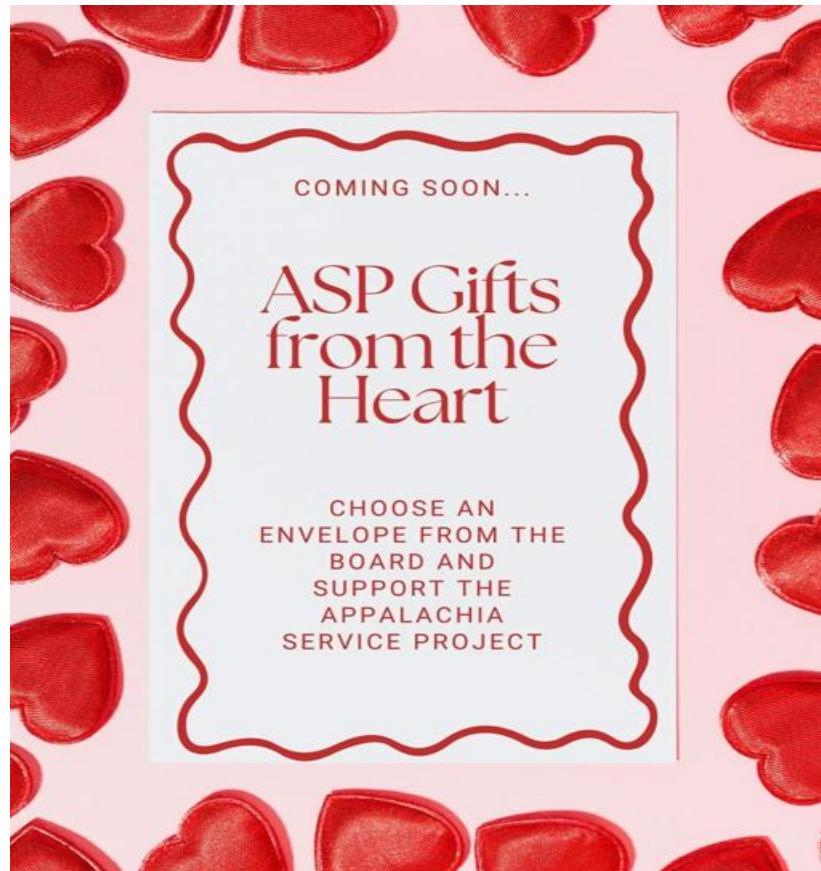
February Altar

Flowers

February 1 Beth Bruha
February 8 Open Spot
February 15 Carla Walter
February 22 Open spot

Debbi Bloomingdale is a Notary. If you need something notarized, please call the church office. This service is free to church members and their families.





Ministry by, with and for women, supporting spiritual growth individually and in community, encouraging and recognizing the unique needs that come with life stages.

Adapted from www.resourceumc.org/en/topics/womens-ministry

Join us on Saturday Feb 14th (Happy Valentines Day) at 10:00am. We'll be having different stations talking about prayer, music, Psalms and star words are just a few ways we find for prayer. Hope to see you there, we'll save you a seat.

Please call any of the ministry team with questions, (Karen Frazer, Pam Rossmiller, Carla Walter, Linda Lennon or Cindy Poulter). We'll save you a seat.



Visitation Team

"And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love.

Love is what binds us together in perfect harmony,"

Colossians 3:14

In February the focus is on Valentine's Day and on expressing love. As Christians we are called to share the love of God every day, not just on February 14th. Do not neglect your calling. Take time to share God's love with a friend, a neighbor or a fellow church member.

If you have suggestions on how the Visitation Team may more effectively minister, please notify a team member or contact the church office at (815) 544-3479.

"Do what you can to show you care about other people and you will make our world a better place." Rosalynn Carter

The Visitation Team: Karen McClenthen, Mary Lou Poulter, Linda Clair, Rene Worden, Joanie Eastland & Janet Wheeler

Next meeting March 16 at 2pm in the Parlor



All men of the church are invited to our meeting.

Our next UMM meeting is 8:30am Saturday, 2/21/2026 in Perry Hall at the church. Come for breakfast, fellowship, and a discussion of upcoming plans!



Lent Word Search

E	N	S	K	F	O	R	G	I	V	E	N	E	S	S	O	O	D	F	G	
R	O	A	W	L	Y	K	E	R	U	S	L	O	R	Y	I	M	B	A	I	
P	I	S	K	R	M	E	N	O	I	X	H	E	N	A	S	H	E	S	K	
E	X	O	E	A	Y	K	A	R	S	S	O	R	C	D	W	A	T	T	R	
N	B	L	E	S	A	L	N	I	K	A	L	K	E	Y	D	E	R	I	O	
A	S	H	W	E	D	N	E	S	D	A	Y	O	D	T	U	D	F	N	S	
N	E	M	Y	Y	O	N	P	S	R	U	M	T	A	P	R	B	E	T	G	E
C	R	O	L	K	U	Y	I	E	A	S	H	P	G	O	O	D	L	A	T	
E	R	A	O	V	S	O	R	K	C	R	U	C	I	F	I	X	I	O	N	
D	I	S	H	I	M	K	S	L	E	M	R	E	M	B	I	P	E	R	O	
O	S	A	M	F	L	P	A	O	D	F	S	I	L	A	E	R	N	K	I	
C	J	E	R	O	A	S	C	G	O	O	D	F	R	I	D	A	Y	S	T	
R	E	Y	A	R	P	E	R	A	M	R	A	D	E	A	W	S	I	S	C	
U	R	S	P	E	D	R	I	L	A	T	Y	A	J	R	E	T	S	A	E	
C	U	S	Y	L	E	C	F	E	L	S	O	P	E	G	O	E	Y	C	R	
N	S	E	A	K	S	W	I	P	R	E	K	S	S	E	L	B	V	E	R	
I	A	R	W	E	E	K	C	R	A	J	E	R	U	H	E	G	O	F	U	
S	L	A	Y	A	R	T	E	B	O	S	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	
H	E	S	A	C	T	M	O	W	S	U	R	H	O	L	P	A	N	K	E	
A	M	B	P	E	N	R	E	I	M	E	C	N	A	T	N	E	P	E	R	

Word Bank

ASHES	DESERT	GOOD FRIDAY	PENANCE
ASH WEDNESDAY	DISCIPLES	HOLY THURSDAY	PRAYER
BETRAYAL	EASTER	HOLY WEEK	REPENTANCE
BLESS	FASTING	JERUSALEM	RESURRECTION
CROSS	FORGIVENESS	JESUS	RISEN
CRUCIFIXION	FORTY DAYS	PALM SUNDAY	SACRIFICE

Board of Ordained Ministry Candidates' Conference – On Monday the 2nd, Pastor Jim and Pastor Pam will be with the Northern Illinois Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM), interviewing candidates for commissioning and ordination as deacons and elders in our church. We will mark the dates in worship, praying for the candidates, that they may be built up by the experience, for the Board, that they might receive wisdom and discernment for the work, and for our Church, that we might be built up by the addition of new clergy and the process of developing and selecting those who offer themselves for ordination. Please add your prayers, especially for Pastor Jim and Pastor Pam as they participate in the work of the Board.

UMC bishops seek guidance – (see the full letter on our “Family” bulletin board. Our Council of Bishops has outlined a plan for

- **A denomination-wide survey** (available in six languages) that asks what you hope for, what you envision, and what message you want gathering participants to carry forward
- **Three webinar sessions** featuring diverse theological voices from across our global connection
- The **Gathering Hope Annual Conference** initiative that ensures grassroots voices directly shape the October gathering agenda

These are opportunities for us to raise questions and concerns and prioritize the work and direction of our church where we feel it is most needed. If you feel God speaking to you about the future, not just of First UMC but the whole UMC, there's an opportunity to get involved and be heard. A fuller description with link can be found at

<2026leadershipgatheringofthecob.pdf>

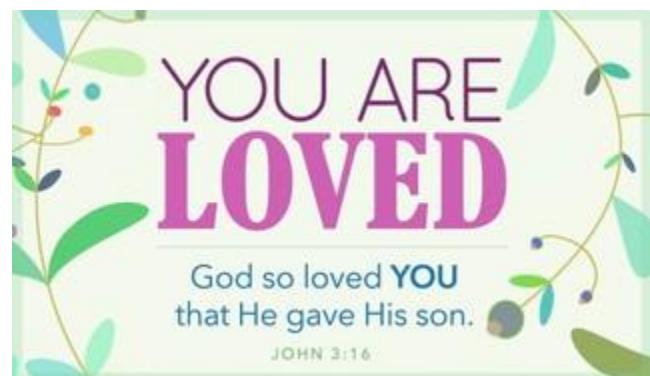


Can I still get Church merchandise?

YES YOU CAN!

Below is the web address for your convenience from Twin Towers

<https://belvidere-first-united-methodist-church-fall-2024.itemorder.com/shop/home/>



Please join us on **Sunday Feb 22nd at 11:30am** for the 2026 Park District Hug an Athlete event. There is actually no hugging, just cheering on the runners. We need you.

Sign up on the community event table after Sunday services.



Money Matters ~Becky Newport

Offering: Beyond Obligation

In the scriptural context, offerings extend beyond the obligatory nature of tithes. These acts of giving are voluntary, driven by a heart full of gratitude, reverence, and love. The Bible speaks of offerings not just in terms of material wealth but also in dedicating time and talents for God's glory.

Scriptural Insights

The Freewill Offering (Exodus 35:29)

The Israelites' voluntary contributions to the construction of the Tabernacle are emblematic of the spirit of freewill offerings. This act demonstrated their willingness to give generously, motivated by a deep sense of gratitude and devotion.

The Macedonian Churches (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

The Macedonian churches' remarkable generosity, despite their own poverty, illuminates the essence of biblical offerings. Their giving was an outpouring of joy and faith, exemplifying how true generosity knows no bounds.

<u>2025 Financial Information</u>				
		December	Year-to-Date	
Income		128,697.74	567,449.69	Annual Apportionment 61,764.00
Expenses		65,758.67	533,271.08	Apportionment paid to date 61,764.00
Net Income (Loss)		62,939.07	34,178.61	

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM EV Sunday School 12:00 PM EV Worship	2 5:30 PM SPRC Meeting 6:00 PM Cubscout Committee Meeting	3 2:00 PM Bright Point Head Start 6:00 PM Disciple 1 7:00 PM Boy Scouts 7:00 PM Cub Scouts	4 9:00 AM Psalm Sisters Bible Study 10:30 AM Ladies Fitness Class 4:00 PM Community Soup Supper 5:30 PM Disciple 3 6:00 PM Disciples Forever	5	6 1:00 PM UWF Board Meeting 5:00 PM EV Band Practice	7
8 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM EV Sunday School 12:00 PM EV Worship	9 5:30 PM Finance/Council Meeting 6:00 PM Cub Scouts	10 6:00 PM Disciple 1 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	11 9:00 AM Psalm Sisters Bible Study 10:30 AM Ladies Fitness Class 5:30 PM Disciple 3 6:00 PM Disciples Forever	12	13 5:00 PM EV Band Practice	14 10:00 AM Women's Ministry Meeting in Perry Hall
15 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM EV Sunday School 12:00 PM EV Worship	16 5:30 PM Mission Meeting 6:00 PM Cub Scout Pack Meeting 6:30 PM Ambassador Meeting	17 2:00 PM Bright Point Doula Program 6:00 PM Disciple 1 7:00 PM Boy Scouts 7:00 PM Cub Scouts	18 9:00 AM Psalm Sisters Bible Study 10:30 AM Ladies Fitness Class 6:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service	19	20 5:00 PM EV Band Practice	21 8:30 AM UMM Meeting
22 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM EV Sunday School 12:00 PM EV Worship 1:30 PM EV Luncheon 2:00 PM District Camp Ministry Task Force	23 5:30 PM Trustee Meeting 6:00 PM Cub Scouts	24 6:00 PM Disciple 1 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	25 9:00 AM Psalm Sisters Bible Study 10:30 AM Ladies Fitness Class 5:30 PM Disciple 3 6:00 PM Disciples Forever	26 2:00 PM Book Club 7:00 PM Boy Scouts Committee Meeting	27 5:00 PM EV Band Practice	28



Jan 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Mar 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				





ONE YEAR BIBLE ONLINE.COM

February

	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm	Proverbs
<input type="checkbox"/>	01 Exodus 13:17-15:18	Matthew 21:23-46	Psalm 26:1-12	Proverbs 6:16-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	02 Exodus 15:19-17:7	Matthew 22:1-33	Psalm 27:1-6	Proverbs 6:20-26
<input type="checkbox"/>	03 Exodus 17:8-19:15	Matthew 22:34-23:12	Psalm 27:7-14	Proverbs 6:27-35
<input type="checkbox"/>	04 Exodus 19:16-21:21	Matthew 23:13-39	Psalm 28:1-9	Proverbs 7:1-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	05 Exodus 21:22-23:13	Matthew 24:1-28	Psalm 29:1-11	Proverbs 7:6-23
<input type="checkbox"/>	06 Exodus 23:14-25:40	Matthew 24:29-51	Psalm 30:1-12	Proverbs 7:24-27
<input type="checkbox"/>	07 Exodus 26:1-27:21	Matthew 25:1-30	Psalm 31:1-8	Proverbs 8:1-11
<input type="checkbox"/>	08 Exodus 28:1-43	Matthew 25:31-26:13	Psalm 31:9-18	Proverbs 8:12-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	09 Exodus 29:1-30:10	Matthew 26:14-46	Psalm 31:19-24	Proverbs 8:14-26
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Exodus 30:11-31:18	Matthew 26:47-68	Psalm 32:1-11	Proverbs 8:27-32
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 Exodus 32:1-33:23	Matthew 26:69-27:14	Psalm 33:1-11	Proverbs 8:33-36
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 Exodus 34:1-35:9	Matthew 27:15-31	Psalm 33:12-22	Proverbs 9:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 Exodus 35:10-36:38	Matthew 27:32-66	Psalm 34:1-10	Proverbs 9:7-8
<input type="checkbox"/>	14 Exodus 37:1-38:31	Matthew 28:1-20	Psalm 34:11-22	Proverbs 9:9-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	15 Exodus 39:1-40:38	Mark 1:1-28	Psalm 35:1-16	Proverbs 9:11-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	16 Leviticus 1:1-3:17	Mark 1:29-2:12	Psalm 35:17-28	Proverbs 9:13-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	17 Leviticus 4:1-5:19	Mark 2:13-3:6	Psalm 36:1-12	Proverbs 10:1-2
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 Leviticus 6:1-7:27	Mark 3:7-30	Psalm 37:1-11	Proverbs 10:3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	19 Leviticus 7:28-9:6	Mark 3:31-4:25	Psalm 37:12-29	Proverbs 10:5
<input type="checkbox"/>	20 Leviticus 9:7-10:20	Mark 4:26-5:20	Psalm 37:30-40	Proverbs 10:6-7
<input type="checkbox"/>	21 Leviticus 11:1-12:8	Mark 5:21-43	Psalm 38:1-22	Proverbs 10:8-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	22 Leviticus 13:1-59	Mark 6:1-29	Psalm 39:1-13	Proverbs 10:10
<input type="checkbox"/>	23 Leviticus 14:1-57	Mark 6:30-56	Psalm 40:1-10	Proverbs 10:11-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	24 Leviticus 15:1-16:28	Mark 7:1-23	Psalm 40:11-17	Proverbs 10:13-14
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 Leviticus 16:29-18:30	Mark 7:24-8:10	Psalm 41:1-13	Proverbs 10:15-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	26 Leviticus 19:1-20:21	Mark 8:11-38	Psalm 42:1-11	Proverbs 10:17
<input type="checkbox"/>	27 Leviticus 20:22-22:16	Mark 9:1-29	Psalm 43:1-5	Proverbs 10:18
<input type="checkbox"/>	28 Leviticus 22:17-23:44	Mark 9:30-10:12	Psalm 44:1-8	Proverbs 10:19

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9-3

Friday 9-12

After hour emergencies--847-764-6563

Worship 9:00 AM

Sunday School 10:15 Sept--May

Find us on the web @fumcbelvidere.org



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website.**



**If you would like us to
to pray for you, email the
church or scan the QR
code below.**

