

OCTOBER 2026

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
610 BONUS AVE
BELVIDERE, IL
61008**



FUMC Courier



October Newsletter

The God Who Prepares the Rain

Recently, I have new neighbors. My husband and I live in one of two parsonages on the property of the church he serves. The other parsonage had been empty for quite some time. In the past, it was used by an associate pastor's family, but now it has occasionally provided a place to stay for missionaries visiting from overseas or for church members going through difficult circumstances.

Recently, the church opened the house to Garrett Seminary, and a student family moved in. They have served as missionaries in Thailand for about ten years and have now come to the United States for a sabbatical while studying leadership development.

One day, as we were talking, our conversation turned to the image of rain - the rain of grace, and the spring of grace. That conversation stayed with me. And later, I found myself thinking about these words from Psalm 147: He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. (Psalm 147:8, NSRVUE)

I was especially drawn to one simple phrase: God prepares the rain. Before the grass grows, God prepares the rain. Before the earth produces anything, God provides what it needs. Before we give, God gives. Perhaps that is a good place to begin as we enter this season of stewardship. We often think of stewardship by asking, "What should I give?" But Scripture invites us to begin with a different question: **"What have I already received?"**

Our time. Our abilities. Our resources. The people around us. The opportunities placed before us. Even the ordinary things we may easily overlook - all of these can become places where we recognize God's grace. **Stewardship begins by noticing the rain.** It begins by recognizing that so much of what sustains us has first been given to us. And when we recognize God's provision, our giving becomes more than an obligation. It becomes our response to grace.

I think again about the house next door. For a while, it was simply an empty house. But when it was opened, it became a place of rest, learning, and renewal for a missionary family. Something already there, became a blessing when it was made available to someone else.

Some of the blessings we enjoy today came to us through the faithfulness of those who came before us. **And perhaps some of what we offer to God today is rain God is preparing for those who will come after us.**

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The rain God prepares does not simply fall. It waters the earth. Grass grows. Life is nourished. God's grace is like that. It comes to us, but it is never meant to end with us. Grace creates life. Grace produces generosity. Grace flows through us so that others may also be strengthened, welcomed, fed, encouraged, and loved.

So, during this stewardship season, perhaps we can begin not with what we are being asked to give, but with gratitude. Where have you noticed God's rain in your life? What is growing because of the grace you have received? And how might God be inviting you to let that grace flow through you to someone else?

The God who prepares the rain is still providing, still nurturing, and still bringing forth life. May we receive God's grace with gratitude – and faithfully share what has been entrusted to us.

See you at church

Pastor Jay



Thanks to all the lovely folks who sent cards and good wishes for my recent birthday! I enjoyed everyone!

With sincere gratitude,

Kay Walters

Thank you to all the dear friends who remembered Joanne Wensky's 96th birthday with either a visit, a card, or a delicious treat. Your kindness is greatly appreciated.



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.



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 with you
- Branch of military
- Location serving
- Address to send correspondence

Hospitality Team

Isaiah 58:7 “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

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





**Join us Wednesday
October 7th
4:30pm-6pm
for a Community Meal
in Perry Hall
We will be serving
Chicken & Rice Casserole**

If you are interested in volunteering to help, please call Karen Frazer

Stewardship Celebration and Town Hall

On Sunday the 25th we will wrap up our Stewardship series with a Celebration Brunch after worship in Perry Hall. We'll hear a little about what we've done in the last 6 months and what we anticipate in the months ahead.

A continental breakfast will be available. Committee and ministry leaders will be seated near you to hear your questions and suggestions. There will be an opportunity to add your suggestions to the mix. Save the date and come help us grow.

The Trustee team asks;
Have you hugged your mower
lately?



What's green and yellow and bounces around
our property each week?



It's Greg Keegan and Craig Lawler, who
volunteer many hours each week to keep our
17 acres looking their best. Please take a
moment to thank them for their dedication.

Check out these books from our church library in
October!

For Kids: *The Story of Paul* by Grolier

For Women: *The Harlot by the side of the Road*
by Kirsch

For Men: *Where is God When it Hurts* by Yancey

October Greeter Schedule

October 4 Carol Rowe

October 11 Bundschuh
Family

October 18 Jahn Family

October 25 Linda & Cherie
Clair

October Ushers

Max Gardner

Curt Newport

Tammie Bahling

Rich Bahling

Galatians Bible Study Thank-You Note from Pastor Jay

Thank you for being part of our Galatians Bible Study!

I am grateful for your presence, your questions, and the conversations we shared together. Your willingness to come and be part of this study, especially as a way of supporting me in my ordination journey, meant more to me than I can say. Through your presence and encouragement, I felt deeply loved and supported by this church family. Thank you!

Please don't forget to complete the feedback form. Your feedback is very helpful to me as I continue to grow as a pastor and prepare future Bible studies.

Thank you for learning and growing together with me!

October Altar

Flowers

*October 4 Paul & Shauna
Arco*

*October 11 Rich & Tammie
Bahling*

*October 18 Paul, Amy, &
Sarah*

*October 25 Max &
Jeanette Gardner*



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.

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.



United Women in Faith

Board Meeting

October 5th Adult Classroom
1pm

General Meeting

October 6th Perry Hall 10am

Our program is BINGO!

Gift cards & other prizes.

Always fun! Plan to attend.

See you there!

UMM

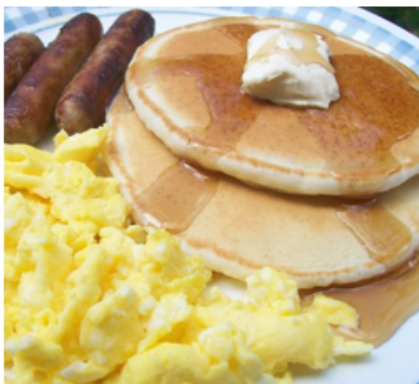
There will be no meeting in
October. See you at the
Pancake Breakfast!

October Mission Collection

We will be collecting shampoo,
conditioner, deodorant for both
men & women, and feminine
hygiene items for Empower Boone
during the month of October. There
will be a bin located between the
entrance doors.

Thank you.

UMM PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Saturday, October 31

7:30 - 10am in Perry Hall

Proceeds to benefit ASP / Youth Programs

**Serving pancakes, scrambled eggs,
sausage, applesauce, and a beverage.**



\$10 Adults // \$5 Kids (10 & under)

Tickets are available from UMM members or
the church office!



Visitation Team

"But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...." Galatians 5:22

Kindness is one of the fruits of the spirit and should be part of who we are as God's children. As God pours out his kindness on us, he expects us to share that with others. Pray that God will lead you to individuals who need a kind touch or an encouraging word. Join the Visitation Team in reaching out with phone calls, cards and visits. Those contacts will bless the recipients, will bless you, and will delight your heavenly Father.

If you know a person who joins us online, or if there is someone who would appreciate a visit, please share that information with a team member.

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless." Mother Teresa

Visitation Team: Karen McClenthen, Mary Lou Poulter, Rene Worden, Linda Clair, Pastor Jay Shin & Janet Wheeler

United Methodist Men Potato Drop

The Prairie North District UMM have partnered with the Society of St. Andrew, a nationwide, ecumenical, nonprofit organization that salvages fresh produce that might otherwise be wasted and distributes it to agencies that feed the hungry.

On **Sunday, October 11th**, our UMM team will have 200, 10-pound bags of potatoes to hand out to our congregation, their families, friends and neighbors, to help support those who may be in need. You are encouraged to take one or more bags of potatoes to use or give to those in need. Our UMM team will be at the entrance door after service is completed to help assist in loading these bags into your vehicle.

October is Pastor appreciation month.

If you would like to drop off a card for our Pastors, bring them to the church office. Let's show them how much we love and appreciate them!

There is also a signup sheet in the gathering area to pick an October day to pray for our Pastors.



Date: Wednesday October 21

Location: First United Methodist Church

Time: 3:30pm-5pm

Address: 610 Bonus Ave, Belvidere IL



ARE YOU HUNGRY?

If you don't have enough to eat, Northern Illinois Food Bank's Mobile Market Pantry can help.

Northern Illinois Food Bank's Mobile Pantry distributes nutritious food in high-need areas.

Food is free so neighbors can thrive.

Please bring bags or boxes in which to package your food.



Food is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last.

Scan QR Code
to learn more



**NEIGHBORS.
EMPOWERED.**

www.SolveHungerToday.org/GetHelp



NEECITA USTED ALIMENTOS

Si usted no alcanza lo suficiente para sustentar su comida, la Despensa Móvil de Northern Illinois Food Bank puede ayudarlo.

La Despensa Móvil de Northern Illinois Food Bank distribuye comida nutritiva en lugares con necesidades altas.

La comida es gratuita para que los vecinos puedan prosperar.

Por favor traiga bolsas o cajas para envasar su comida.



La comida se distribuye por orden de llegada, hasta agotar la existencias.

Escanee el código
QR para saber más



**VECINOS.
EMPODERADOS.**

www.SolveHungerToday.org/GetHelp



We are not having a women's ministry gathering on our normal 2nd Saturday (Oct 10th) because of the retreat. We hope to see you all there!

Downtown Trick or Treat – Candy Donations Needed!

Once again, this year, our church will participate in Belvidere's Downtown Business Trick or Treat!

The event will be held on Wednesday, October 28, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. As we have done in past years, we will welcome children and families from our community and share lots of candy with them.

We are asking for donations of individually wrapped candy to help us prepare. You may bring your candy donations to the church anytime before the event.

Thank you for helping us share some fun and hospitality with our community!



UWF Bazaar

November 6th

Hamball Luncheon

11am-1pm

Tickets \$15 each

Tickets may be purchased from a member, or in the church office, beginning October 12th

Granny's Attic 9am-2pm

Items make wonderful gifts! Drop off items in good condition (Christmas items, glassware, linens, collectibles, antiques) November 2 & 3 at the church.



Money Matter ~Becky Newport

3. Blessed to Be a Blessing

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

It may be corny but tell me what's not true about this: "We are blessed to be a blessing!" Paul's own words in Acts put the emphasis on the joy and blessing of giving.

Every time we give, we enable our church to reach out and support those in need. As we share our resources, we echo God's grace in our lives. *We get to give*, see, and experience the change and transformation in the people and community around us!

Points to Ponder:

- We are blessed as we give
- Giving isn't about stuff, it's about people
- It is more blessed to give than to receive

~From 20 Effective, Encouraging Tithe & Offering Messages

<u>2026 Financial Information</u>				
	August	Year-to-Date		
Income	40,682.55	280,035.49	Annual Apportionment	54,140.50
Expenses	38,964.02	328,058.87	Apportionment paid to date	27,943.54
Net Income (Loss)	1,718.53	(48,023.38)		

"Get Ready for Winter"

Mission Team would like to offer help to anyone who needs assistance getting ready for winter.

Do you need windows closed and locked?

Do you need lawn furniture put away?

Do you need a furnace filter changed?

Do you need yard work done?

We can help! Just give us a call and we will match you with the right person to help. Call the church office at (815) 544-3479 or Cindy Poulter at (815) 621-0651.





October

	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalms	Proverbs
☐ 01	Isaiah 62:6-65:25	Philippians 2:19-3:3	Psalms 73:1-28	Proverbs 24:13-14
☐ 02	Isaiah 66:1-24	Philippians 3:4-21	Psalms 74:1-23	Proverbs 24:15-16
☐ 03	Jeremiah 1:1-2:30	Philippians 4:1-23	Psalms 75:1-10	Proverbs 24:17-20
☐ 04	Jeremiah 2:31-4:18	Colossians 1:1-17	Psalms 76:1-12	Proverbs 24:21-22
☐ 05	Jeremiah 4:19-6:15	Colossians 1:18-2:7	Psalms 77:1-20	Proverbs 24:23-25
☐ 06	Jeremiah 6:16-8:7	Colossians 2:8-23	Psalms 78:1-31	Proverbs 24:26
☐ 07	Jeremiah 8:8-9:26	Colossians 3:1-17	Psalms 78:32-55	Proverbs 24:27
☐ 08	Jeremiah 10:1-11:23	Colossians 3:18-4:18	Psalms 78:56-72	Proverbs 24:28-29
☐ 09	Jeremiah 12:1-14:10	1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:8	Psalms 79:1-13	Proverbs 24:30-34
☐ 10	Jeremiah 14:11-16:15	1 Thessalonians 2:9-3:13	Psalms 80:1-19	Proverbs 25:1-5
☐ 11	Jeremiah 16:16-18:23	1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:3	Psalms 81:1-16	Proverbs 25:6-8
☐ 12	Jeremiah 19:1-21:14	1 Thessalonians 5:4-28	Psalms 82:1-8	Proverbs 25:9-10
☐ 13	Jeremiah 22:1-23:20	2 Thessalonians 1:1-12	Psalms 83:1-18	Proverbs 25:11-14
☐ 14	Jeremiah 23:21-25:38	2 Thessalonians 2:1-17	Psalms 84:1-12	Proverbs 25:15
☐ 15	Jeremiah 26:1-27	2 Thessalonians 3:1-18	Psalms 85:1-13	Proverbs 25:16
☐ 16	Jeremiah 28:1-29:32	1 Timothy 1:1-20	Psalms 86:1-17	Proverbs 25:17
☐ 17	Jeremiah 30:1-31:26	1 Timothy 2:1-15	Psalms 87:1-7	Proverbs 25:18-19
☐ 18	Jeremiah 31:27-32:44	1 Timothy 3:1-16	Psalms 88:1-18	Proverbs 25:20-22
☐ 19	Jeremiah 33:1-34:22	1 Timothy 4:1-16	Psalms 89:1-13	Proverbs 25:23-24
☐ 20	Jeremiah 35:1-36:32	1 Timothy 5:1-25	Psalms 89:14-37	Proverbs 25:25-27
☐ 21	Jeremiah 37:1-38:28	1 Timothy 6:1-21	Psalms 89:38-52	Proverbs 25:28
☐ 22	Jeremiah 39:1-41:18	2 Timothy 1:1-18	Psalms 90:1-91:16	Proverbs 26:1-2
☐ 23	Jeremiah 42:1-44:23	2 Timothy 2:1-21	Psalms 92:1-93	Proverbs 26:3-5
☐ 24	Jeremiah 44:24-47:7	2 Timothy 2:22-3:17	Psalms 94:1-23	Proverbs 26:6-8
☐ 25	Jeremiah 48:1-49:22	2 Timothy 4:1-22	Psalms 95:1-96:13	Proverbs 26:9-12
☐ 26	Jeremiah 49:23-50:46	Titus 1:1-16	Psalms 97:1-98:9	Proverbs 26:13-16
☐ 27	Jeremiah 51:1-53	Titus 2:1-15	Psalms 99:1-9	Proverbs 26:17
☐ 28	Jeremiah 51:54-52:34	Titus 3:1-15	Psalms 100:1-5	Proverbs 26:18-19
☐ 29	Lamentations 1:1-2:22	Philemon 1:1-25	Psalms 101:1-8	Proverbs 26:20
☐ 30	Lamentations 3:1-66	Hebrews 1:1-14	Psalms 102:1-28	Proverbs 26:21-22
☐ 31	Lamentations 4:1-5:22	Hebrews 2:1-18	Psalms 103:1-22	Proverbs 26:23

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October 2026

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday																																																																																													
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First United Methodist Church
610 Bonus Ave
Belvidere, IL 61008
Pastor Jim Bell
Associate Pastor Jay Shin

Phone: 815-544-3479

E-mail: officeadmin@fumcbelvidere.com

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](http://fumcbelvidere.org)



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