

FEBRUARY 2026

THE CROWS NEST

SPRINGDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

"Jesus isn't into religion;
He's into **love**. He's
not about rules; He's
about *relationship*—and
He wants **people**
everywhere to **know**
Him."

SHANA SCHUTTE



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BIRTHDAYS

3 - Huxley Sabourin
4 - Ben Donohoe
6 - Abby Knoop
14 - Tricia Manning
14 - Nate Nash
14 - Nick Nash
17 - Bailey Donohue
17- Moose Maxson
17- Spencer Whitlatch
19 - Josh Hartz
20 - Ali Jo Baker
23 - Jeremiah Sabourin
26 - Zeb Brown
28 - Jodi Clemens
28 - Mitchell Hesseltine
28 - Jenny Sabourin

ANNIVERSARIES

2 - Jeremiah & Alinda Sabourin (10)

SUMC'S MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

We exist as a church to make disciples, bringing persons to Jesus Christ and to Christ's community.

Vision

*The Church bulges with attendance; Babies cry in the back pew; and Cheerios can be found on the floor.

*Many people get their hands dirty serving God's church and God's children.

*Persons of all ages regularly meet together in every nook and cranny for spiritual support and nurturing.

*Congregations give joyfully.

Values

*Everything we do is based on our worth as God's children and seeing that in others.

*We use all we have and are to serve God and God's people.

*We believe in joy, content to give thanks to the Lord in all things even through tough times of darkness.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres".

1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

REBECCA'S REFLECTIONS



February has arrived, with frigid temperatures still hanging around. However, as we know from other years, the weather will change soon. February is a transition month from season to season, from dark and cold to more light and moderating temperatures. It is also the time when we in the church transition from the season of Epiphany, the season of Light, to the season of Lent and penitence. As we enter Lent on Ash Wednesday, we begin our six-week journey to Holy Week and ultimately, to Easter Sunday. But first, we will go to the mountaintop with Jesus and the disciples, to experience transfiguration and renewal.

As we begin Lent, I encourage everyone to consider attending the Ash Wednesday Service at West Branch UMC on February 18th at 6:00 pm. Then, whether it is in person or on-line, consider being a part of the Lenten Bible Study (Thursdays at 9:00 am or on Facebook). The study this year is "Meeting Jesus on the Road".

Join us for worship in February—you'll be glad you did!

Rebecca

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 4 - Discipleship Night 5:30 p.m. @ WBUMC
- February 8 - Scouts Sunday; ALL scouts welcome; **Fellowship** after worship
- February 8 - Packing 7 Cookie Buckets; **baked goods needed**
- February 11 - Discipleship Night 5:30 p.m. @ WBUMC
- February 11 - UMW Meeting 6:30 p.m. @ SUMC
- February 15 - Birthday Sunday; bring your coins; **NO** fellowship
- February 18 - Ash Wednesday Service @ WBUMC 7 p.m.
- February 18 - Discipleship Night; **need volunteers and baked goods**
- February 19 - Lenten Study Begins; 9:00 a.m. @ SUMC or online
- February 23 - UMW Bingo 2:30 p.m. @ Crestview
- February 23 - Ad Board 6 p.m. @ SUMC
- February 25 - Discipleship Night 5:30 p.m. @ WBUMC
- February 26 - Lenten Study; 9:00 a.m. @ SUMC or online
- March - 9 - Family Faith Night; 6-6:45 p.m. @ SUMC
- March 14 - District Leadership Training 9a.m. - Noon @ First UMC

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

Theme for the Month:

February 1

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Communion Sunday
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12
Sermon: "Acceptable Boasts"

February 8

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Scouting Sunday
Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20
Sermon: "Salt and Light"

February 15

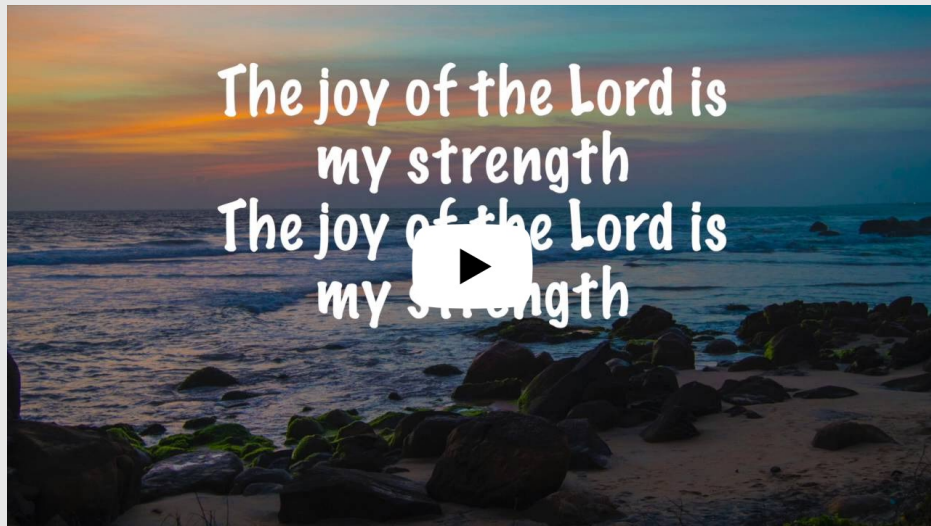
Transfiguration Sunday, Birthday Sunday
Scripture: 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9
Sermon: "Seeing the Light"

February 22

First Sunday in Lent
Scripture: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Matthew 4:1-11
Sermon: "Hiding"

Adult Sunday School at 9 a.m.
Wednesday Night Discipleship 5:30 p.m. - WBUMC

SONG OF THE MONTH



LOVE THAT GOES BEYOND OUR WALLS

February often invites us to think about love—romantic love, family love, friendship, and the many relationships that shape our lives. In the church, however, love is never meant to stay small or private. Christ's love is expansive. It moves outward. It crosses boundaries. It invites, welcomes, and transforms.

For those of us serving in outreach, mission, and evangelism, February is a timely reminder that love is not just a feeling—it is a calling.

Jesus tells us that the greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbors. That second commandment doesn't come with qualifiers. It doesn't depend on how long someone has attended church, how familiar they are with scripture, or how comfortable we feel around them. It simply calls us to love. Outreach and evangelism begin not with programs or plans, but with genuine relationships rooted in Christ-like love.

When we greet someone warmly on Sunday morning, when we notice a family that hasn't been here in a while, when we reach out to our community through service and compassion—we are practicing evangelism. Every act of kindness becomes a living testimony to the love of God. People are far more likely to encounter Christ through how they are treated than through what they are told.

Mission work, too, is an expression of love in action. Whether it's supporting local organizations, helping neighbors in need, or participating in broader mission efforts, we are showing the world that God's love is practical, present, and powerful. These acts say, "You matter. You are seen. You are loved."

In a season when the world often narrows love down to romance or sentiment, the church has an opportunity to show something deeper and wider. We are called to be a community where love looks like hospitality, patience, forgiveness, generosity, and courage. A place where people can belong before they believe, and be known before they are fully known to us.

As we move through February, may we ask ourselves: *How is God inviting me to love more boldly?* Who in our community needs a relationship, not just an invitation? Where can our church be a visible sign of Christ's love beyond our walls?

Love is the heart of the Gospel. When we live it out together, outreach, mission, and evangelism become not just committee work—but holy work.

Paula Rogers
COME Chair

LENTEN *Study*

Beginning February 19
9:00 a.m.
SUMC



Contact Jo for more information.

THE WESLEYAN CONCEPT OF GRACE

A three-party series by Joe Iovino

The Bible teaches us that everything we have from God is given because of God's great love for us. "You are saved by God's grace because of your faith," Ephesians 2 reads. "This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. It's not something you did that you can be proud of" ([Ephesians 2:8-9 CEB](#)).

United Methodists recognize God's grace at work throughout our spiritual journeys. [John Wesley](#), the historic founder of [the Methodist movement](#), wrote and preached about the role of God's grace to prepare us, redeem us, and continually shape us into the people we were created to be.

[Learn more about God's amazing grace at work in our lives.](#)

WEST BRANCH FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

February

Diapers, pull ups, and Adult Depends.
Larger sizes of diapers and pull ups are appreciated.

March

Pancake Mix and Syrup

WHAT IS THE VISION STATEMENT OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH?

Above is the full version of the [vision statement](#) of The United Methodist Church. You may more often it see abbreviated "Love boldly, Serve joyfully, Lead courageously."

The vision statement of The United Methodist Church does not replace the mission statement: "to

make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The statement in full makes that clear.

Rather, it focuses United Methodists at all levels of church life on the outcomes of our discipling work.

These disciples, it says, are to “love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.”

The vision statement acknowledges that these outcomes are not entirely of our own making. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers all disciples of Jesus Christ. Our role is to collaborate with the Spirit’s work to foster bold love, joyful service and courageous leadership among the disciples we are part of forming.

The vision statement also calls United Methodists at every level of church life to ask what we can do to foster disciples of Jesus who behave like this vision.

Love Boldly

Disciples of Jesus follow his teaching to love our enemies and do good even to those who harm us (Luke 6:27-28). Jesus begins [that sermon](#) by identifying those who are blessed in God’s coming kingdom: the poor, the hungry, the mourning, the persecuted, and the hated. If our love is to focus on those who receive God’s blessing, it should be one with and amplify the voices of people who are poor, people who cannot afford food or other basic needs for themselves or their families, people who face grievous difficulties in their lives, and people who are oppressed or marginalized. In the United States, currently, this explicitly includes transgender people, immigrants, refugees, and people on boats alleged but not proven to carry drugs. All of these people, our neighbors, are currently being targeted by powerful leaders for hostile treatment. Loving boldly calls United Methodists to show love to one another and to all people, especially targeted people, in whatever ways we can—and to do so openly, boldly.

The same sermon also raises a caution for many United Methodists who have plenty of money, are not hungry, find themselves in a place of privilege and are generally spoken well of rather than targeted for hostile treatment. Jesus declares woe to all in any of these positions. That includes me. This is a call to repent. [Sociological research](#) tells us that most people in these positions do not have many if any meaningful relationships with people who are poor, hungry, distraught or treated as hated. Early Methodists who were wealthy were [constantly urged by John Wesley](#) to associate with people who were poor and to visit prisoners. True association requires spending considerable time and effort in building trust with people who do not know us and also do know what people like us have done to them. Loving boldly, for many of us, will require us to learn [how to become allies](#) with those we have largely ignored or abandoned.

Serve joyfully

Service in U.S. culture is often pictured either as a burden one takes upon oneself or something done because one is forced to by circumstances (such as racism, sexism, xenophobia, human traffickers or poverty) or by the courts (community service). For disciples of Jesus, however, service need not be not a burden, nor must it be forced upon us. Service can be an opportunity to live and work alongside those who are most blessed in God’s reign. If we believe that people who are poor, hungry, suffering or targeted for hostile treatment are the blessed, being among them and using whatever privilege we may have to amplify their voices can and must be joyous. So to serve joyfully requires only that we believe what Jesus said to his first disciples about who receives God’s blessings in God’s reign and act accordingly.

Lead courageously

Leadership in U.S. culture is typically associated with individuals placed at the top of an organization or government seeking to control the situation around them to their own perceived advantage. The measure of effective leadership in this context is typically the degree of increase in wealth, status or power generated by the actions of the leader. Leadership in this model is a zero-sum game; the leader’s gain is at the cost of the losses of others.

Leadership as Jesus teaches it is the quite different. “Whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all” (Mark 10:44, NRSVUE). Success in leadership in God’s reign is measured not in how well an individual controls the situation around them, nor in how much the leader gains for the sake of oneself or their organization or government. Success in leadership in God’s reign is measured by whether and how well everyone around the leader is cared for. Such leadership generates a net positive-sum outcome for all involved, making the lives of everyone better, even in the face of ongoing opposition or oppression.

Leadership for disciples of Jesus thus necessarily involves collaboration and partnership more than individual prowess. Its currency is not power, influence or wealth. Costs to disciples who lead courageously are real. They may include reputation, wealth, opportunity and even harm to leaders and their loved ones. Increased power, influence or wealth may instead be indicators that leadership and courage as disciples of Jesus have waned.

The currency of leadership as Jesus teaches is it love for every neighbor, especially neighbors who have fewer resources, are weaker in some way, or are otherwise deprived of power. Effective leadership in God's reign requires the leader to become a trusted partner and work with others to deploy all the assets of a group for the greater benefit of all.

To lead courageously, disciples of Jesus learn a different meaning of courage than is commonly portrayed in U.S. culture. Like leadership itself, courage is generally seen as a quality of the heroic individual who "takes a stand" against a powerful adversary, often in a dramatic and confrontational way. It may be difficult to distinguish the courageous leader, in this model, from someone who exercises fearless, even arrogant bravado.

Courage as Jesus calls for has nothing to do with such heroism. The courageous servant-leader stands with and alongside those God's reign calls blessed, day in, day out. There may be few if any dramatic confrontations. Courage as Jesus teaches it is far more notable for its reliability and persistence over time than "victories" in "decisive clashes."

Creating a culture of disciples of Jesus who lead courageously involves leaders setting a good example of courageous leadership themselves and cultivating many others who are learning how to do the same thing. Courage includes acknowledgment both of our limitations and fears and of our trust in God to fulfill God's promises. With such honesty, integrity and faith, courageous leaders persevere in siding with and working alongside those God's reign calls blessed.

Disciples of Jesus who love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously are people whose lives, work, and relationships become more fully aligned with with the work of God's reign which overcomes the powers of this world. Or, in the words of [Charles Wesley](#) and the commendation of the newly baptized in the United Methodist [baptismal covenant](#), this vision statement aims to help "perfect us in love."



WEDNESDAY NIGHT DISCIPLESHIP

5:30 p.m. - PK-6th grade classes meet in classrooms

6:10 p.m. - Family Worship

6:30 p.m. - Family Supper in Fellowship Hall

(Parent/Guardian required for students in 5th grade and under)

7-8 p.m. 7-12 grade Youth Group

SUMC is looking for volunteers to help prepare, serve, and clean up for the Family Supper the Third Wednesday of every month. We also need volunteers to provide baked goods (6 dozen). Please contact Rebecca or Paula for more information and to sign up.

Looking for other ways to support this ministry? Visit the following supply wish list links: [Walmart](#), [Amazon](#)

FAMILY FAITH NIGHT



 2nd Monday of the month
6:00 PM - 6:45 PM

 Springdale United Methodist Church
554 290th Street
West Branch, IA 52358

 www.springdale.church

We're starting something new in March! A short, relaxed Family Faith Night once a month.

No weekly commitment.

Just food, faith, and time together.

Everyone is welcome.

CONFERENCE, DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT NEWS

Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
Disaster Preparedness and Response



ERT Training

(Early Response Team)

A CARING Christian Presence in the midst of Disaster

Saturday, February 7, 2026

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Cost \$20.00 includes background check, lunch, materials and badge

Meeting at North Liberty UMC
85 N Jones Blvd, North Liberty, IA

For more information or to sign-up Contact:
Pastor Catie Newman, IAUMC Disaster Response Coordinator
disaster.response@iaumc.org or 712-899-4067 phone or text

ERT Teams are a cooperative effort between
UMCOR and Iowa UMC Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee



For More Visit:

[Iowa Conference](#)
[Southeast District](#)
[United Women in Faith](#)

District Superintendent

Rev. Brian Oliver

Email: brian.oliver@iaumc.org

Phone: (319) 382-0436

1. Opening Devotion and Prayer: The Struggle of a Servant
2. November 24, 2025 Minutes
 - a. Lynda moved to approve. Steven seconded. Motion carried.
4. Trustees
 - a. Farm Lease Signed
 1. Payment changed to March 1 to be consistent with Herring's operation
 2. Paula will save the signed copy in the Google Drive
 - c. Time Capsule
 1. Adding stuff this week
 - a. Dedicated the time capsule this past Sunday during worship
 - b. Paula reached out to Theresa to put something together about VBS
 - c. Additions of COVID, UMW, Sunday School, etc.
 - e. Electric Bill—seems high
 1. What could be running? Water heater? Jessica will contact Alliant to see if this was potentially an estimated bill
 - g. Accessibility
 1. Should have a bid by the end of the week
 - i. Deep Cleaning List
 1. List is still sitting in the front pew. It needs to be posted on the bulletin board.
 - k. Gutters—still need to silicone Waiting on warmer weather
6. SPRC Upcoming Dates
 - a. April 19
 - b. Nominations (Lay Leadership Development)
 1. Worship committee -
 - a. Jessica is interested in leading worship
 3. Charge Conference
 - a. Keep goals at forefront for the year (here and with entire congregation)
8. Stewardship
 1. Treasurer's Report—through 2025
 1. What can we do to be more efficient/effective?
 2. Paula moved to approve. Steven seconded. Motion carried.
 3. Money Counting
 1. Procedures & lock box in place
 2. Discussion was had about how to handle Sunday School offering
 5. Stewardship Campaign
 1. Pledge cards
 - a. 9 pledges returned for approximately \$11,000
 - b. Other pledges for approximately \$5,000
 - c. Jessica needs to check with Jessica N. to see if she has any pledge cards that were turned in earlier
 - d. Current budget is at approximately \$48,000.00 - how do we make up the difference?
 3. Empower data input (attendance, pledges, donations, etc.)
 - a. Paula and Jessica will work together to learn more about Empower and what we can and cannot do which will be beneficial for statistical reporting
10. COME
 1. Family Faith Night
 - a. 2nd Mondays of the Month
 3. Food Pantry updates/ideas
 - a. February - Diapers size 6
 - b. March - Pancakes and Syrup
 - c. April
 - d. Do we need flyer and/or cards for people to take if they aren't at church?
12. Other
 1. Lent season worship
 1. Ash Wednesday at WBUMC 6 p.m.
 2. Maundy Thursday @ SUMC
 3. Good Friday @ WBUMC
 4. Sunrise Service Paula - Breakfast Hartz Family
 3. Membership—review for 1st readings
14. Next Meeting:
 - a. February 23, 6 p.m.
16. Closing Prayer

Goal

Key Action Steps

Timeline

Resources Needed

Increase outreach

Identify at least 3 community events for presence or sponsorship; develop simple materials; set up volunteer sign-ups

Ongoing

Flyers; social media posts; volunteer schedule

Increase family attendance

Host family-friendly worship & outreach events quarterly (e.g. picnic, mini-VBS, outdoor service)

Ongoing

Family-friendly activities; food budget

Show appreciation for current attendees

Create quarterly recognition Sundays (e.g. "Birthday Sunday"); thank-you notes

Ongoing

Cards, refreshments

Organize and store church photos

Gather photos; assign a small group to organize photos and develop a storing system (digital and/or physical)

Q2 2026

Photo boxes and/or scanner

ADA Building

Finalize accessibility plan; obtain bids; research grant opportunities

Q1 2026

Contractor bids and grant research

Grow worship attendance by 5% each year

Track attendance; launch invite campaign; feature personal testimonials on social media

Ongoing

Data tracking sheet; social media posts

Separate praise/worship time

Pilot an alternative or contemporary service once per month

Q2 2026

Committee

Outdoor worship/picnic

Schedule at park or church lawn; plan lunch & music

Summer/Fall 2026

Committee

Bi-Annual Bible/Book Study

Identify a study

Q1 & Q3 2026

Curriculum/book; identify a study leader

Lenten Devotional Book

Collect devotions from members; publish by Lent.

Q1 2026

Printing or digital platform

Bless the Animals Sunday

Select date; promote

Fall 2026

Marketing, supplies

Christmas Caroling

Organize routes and songbooks

December 2026

Committee

Weekly blog devotions

Create schedule of authors; make weekly posts

Q1-Q4 2026

Website access

Update Church Directory

Collect info/photos; publish printed & digital copy

Q4 2026

Camera; printing; design

Worship at Little Bear

Contact campground; schedule annual summer service

Annually through 2027

Volunteer; bulletins; sound system

Mission day to Matthew 25 (CR)

Coordinate service team

Annually through 2027

Volunteers

Engage with local celebrations

Participate in at least 2 community festivals each year

Ongoing

Volunteers; identify celebrations

Better utilize west wing & closet

Inventory space; create multipurpose plan (storage ministry use)

Q2 2026

Volunteer

Church-wide clean-up/purge

Annual spring cleaning day

Q2 each year

Create cleaning list and recruit volunteers

Grow connections within circuit

Host or join shared worship/mission events

Ongoing

Identify opportunities

Weekend Retreat (Youth and/or adult)

Plan small retreat at local camp

2026-2027

Identify programming; location; date; promote

Rebuild youth programming

Recruit 2 volunteers; plan quarterly youth events and/or Sunday programming

Q2 2026

Volunteers; curriculum

155th Anniversary Celebration

Form committee at least 1 year in advance; plan worship; meal; and community event

2029

Committee formed by 2028

Revised Yule Buffet

Refresh menu & decor; invite community

Annually beginning 2028-2030

Committee

ADA Building (completion)

Finish all accessibility upgrades

2028-2030

Committee

Increase pastoral support (1/2 to full-time)

Stewardship campaign; reassess budget & needs

2027-2029

Assessments

Long-term stewardship study

Implement multi-week giving & vision series

2026-2028

Committee

Upgrade/update Kitchen

Assess needs, fundraise, and complete renovation

2027-2029

Committee

Seal Time Capsule

Identify items to include

Q1 2026

Announcement as to date

Sew personal dignity kits for Midwest Mission

Recruit sewers or those willing to learn

Q2 2026

Machines, sewing materials