

# THE MESSENGER

## FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR AMANDA . . .

*“We have known and have believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them.” 1 John 4:16*

How could I write you a note in February and not focus on LOVE!?

So here’s the thing – I just love you all. The past six months have been a whirlwind of change for my family for sure, but this body of Christ and the community of Decatur has been a soft place to land. The love of God has no doubt been dwelling richly within this church body for all these many decades, and we have felt the embrace of God’s love and yours in this place.

Our experience of your love is a huge part of what gives me hope for the next chapter in this church’s story. The problems we face are not ours alone. The whole institutional setup of the modern-era church shares them, too. But love is not bound by systems or hierarchies or the weight of institutional preservation. The perfect love of God, in fact, drives out fear. To me, this means that we do not need to fear the future even when we cannot quite yet imagine what it will look like.

But even though I can’t describe to you what our future will look like, I can describe to you what it will feel like. The future of Decatur First United Methodist Church is going to feel like the warm concrete poolside in the late spring/early summer before the heat becomes oppressive in Central Illinois. The future is going to feel like the joy of holding a newborn baby and watching a toddler take first steps. The future of our church is going to feel like that first rain after a time of drought – a miracle. The future is going to feel like that smile you can’t wipe off your face or even tears that fall from any real emotion that doesn’t have to be stifled or controlled.

If I have anything at all to say about it, this is where we’re going. I can’t promise we won’t experience other feelings along the way – discomfort, sadness, or frustration – because some of the journey will involve change and loss and a slower pace than most of us would prefer. But where we are headed is a place of warmth, joy, love and belonging not only for those who are already here, but those persons God is preparing us to receive into this body of Christ.

Love,  
Pastor Amanda



I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN  
*everlasting love*  
JEREMIAH 31:3



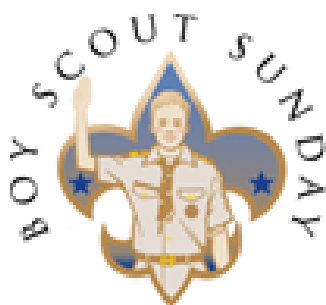
The Illinois Great Rivers Conference camping program is an extension of the local church’s disciple-making process. Its mission is to connect people, nature, and Christ for the transformation of the world. Summer Camp Registration is now open for the 2022 season. Please visit <https://www.igrc.org/camping> to learn more and to register online.



## YOUTH NEWS

from Pastor April

Due to the increase in COVID cases in our community, the confirmation class is on a short delay. Be watching for more information on when this class will begin.



## Save the Date!

Scout Sunday will be Sunday, February 13



## Key Fobs

We need your help. We are running out of key fobs! If you have a fob that you are no longer using, please consider returning it to the office. They are very expensive to replace, and we would prefer to recycle unused ones if possible. Thank you!



If you have a stash of puzzles you have completed and need some different ones to occupy a winter evening, your opportunity awaits! Bring your puzzles any time between February 3 - 20 to Wesley Hall. Bring one - take one or take more and make a generous donation to United Methodist Women's mission projects.



**Sunday Morning Worship Service** is now live streaming on YouTube each Sunday! Just go to our website, [www.decaturfirfirstumc.org](http://www.decaturfirfirstumc.org), click where it says, "Watch Online," and then choose the button that reads, "Click Here to Watch Livestream." (You might have to click the play button or hit refresh when the video comes up.) **Update:** You may also click, "View the Livestream" on the home page of the website.

When you watch online, please take a moment to tell us you're watching by clicking the "Get Connected" button and completing the short survey. Thank you!

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE				
	February 6	February 13	February 20	February 27
LITURGIST	Patty Barr	Troop 202	Duane McCoskey	Barb Cooper
USHERS	Tom McQuiston & Thom Welsh	Troop 202	Tom McQuiston & Thom Welsh	Tom McQuiston & Thom Welsh
ACOLYTES	Mason Richards & Roman Griffith	Troop 202	Victoria Trotman & Aaliyah Wilson	Colton Denny & Aaron Motter
GREETERS	Ritchie and Sandy Barnett	Troop 202	Diana and Jack Keller	Dick and Kathy Butler
WELCOME CENTER	Anna Armstrong	Troop 202	Barb Bolin	
PRAY WITH PASTOR AMANDA	Gayle Dees	Troop 202	Faye Baker	Susan Hawbecker

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

### February 2022

**All women** are invited to participate in UMW. Women do not have to be a member of this or any church to participate. This is a list of UMW circles, leaders, and the February meetings:

#### **Hope Circle**

**Anna Armstrong**

**Kathy Leavitt**

**Hope Circle** will meet Friday, February 4, 9:30 a.m. in Susannah Wesley. You are invited to join them in making yarn hats using looms!

#### **Miriam Circle**

**Linda Mollohan**

**Miriam Circle** will meet Monday, February 7, 9:30 a.m. in the church's library. You are invited! **Ruth Cortright** will present the pledge service with information about UMW missions.

#### **Ruth Circle**

**Patty Barr**

**Ruth Circle** will meet Monday, February 21, 1:30 p.m. in the Chapel. You are invited! **Ruth Cortright** will present the pledge service with information about UMW missions.

**UMW Leadership Team** will meet Wednesday, February 9, 1:30 p.m. in Susannah Wesley Room. **President Virginia McQuiston** hopes all leadership team members will attend because there are several important items to discuss.

UMW at our church has had some major changes since the pandemic began. Even though circles couldn't meet in person for some time, members did keep in touch. The membership has changed. Some members have moved to locations outside the greater Decatur area. Some members can no longer attend in-person meetings. This means that the circle memberships are realigning. Ruth Cortright will compile the 2022 UMW Book soon. Circle leaders have told Ruth of some changes, but they may not know of all changes. If you wish to move to a circle from member-at-large or move to a different circle, please let Ruth know: home 217-424-5191; cell 217-433-8471; email [ruthcort@comcast.net](mailto:ruthcort@comcast.net).



### NEXT FILL-THE-CART OPPORTUNITY:

We are collecting soup and crackers for the February "Fill the Cart". You can put your items in the shopping cart in Wesley Hall. The donated items will be delivered to Northeast Community Fund. Thank you for your contributions and for supporting this mission project.

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Thank you for the donations given for the poinsettias that decorated our sanctuary this Christmas.

GIVEN BY:	IN HONOR OF:
Dan, Heather, Lexi and Trevor Groves	Nancy Groves; Evelyn Norris
Lana Hoey	Maddy Hoey, Charlotte Hoey, Jessica Scroggins, and Christian Barber
Dave & Sandy Johnson	The Ministers and Staff of First UMC
Ellen Lamb	Covenant Sunday School Class
GIVEN BY:	IN MEMORY OF:
Barbara Applen	Warren Applen; Linda Brockschmidt; John and Elvera Reuss
Erwin and Linda Arends	Donald and Velma Chapman; Gilbert and Edna Arends
Anna Armstrong	Robert Brown; Richard Armstrong
Jeff and Linda Burnham and Family	Robert & Dorothy Taylor; Mary Burnham; Johnny Burnham
Pat and Brenda Clark	Glen and Doris Clark
Ruth Cortright	Lucille and Harry Cortright; John M. Cortright; Judith E. Gibbons
John and Carol Drayton	Our Parents
Dan, Heather, Lexi, and Trevor Groves	Butch and Martha Highland; Delvin Groves; Hank Norris
Susan Hawbecker	Rev. Ned Hawbecker
Lana Hoey	Carl Hoey; Leona Hoey; Roger and Madelyn Corrie
Doris Hudson	Dorothy Moody
Dave & Sandy Johnson	Maurice and Jacquelin Johnson; Dudley and Sarah Sloan
Kristy and Kimberly Logan and Families	Grandpa Lovie
Tom and Virginia McQuiston	John and Helen McQuiston; Herbert and Ruth Frank
John Rasche Family	Judy Rasche
Dianne and John Renner	Amy Jo Beals
Mark and Debbie Vandermyde	Barbara Vandermyde; Carl and Ruth Kuester
Ellen Lamb	Doyle Lamb, Henrietta and Jodie Armstrong

## ALTAR FLOWERS



Donations can be made toward flowers on any given Sunday as a memorial or in honor of someone or something.

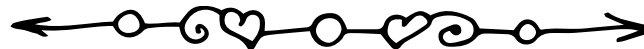
# thank you

Thank you for the kindness, support and sympathy shown at a time when it was deeply appreciated.  
-Jan and John Allen

*I wanted to take a moment to say 'thank you' to everyone who stepped up to make Christmas happen for the children at Chaddock this year! I spent December overwhelmed with gratitude and in awe of how you extended your love and generosity to our kids. I have so many stories that I could share of kids beaming and excited at Christmas. I have a few tear-jerkers as well. Every story ends with the same thought....Thank you!*

*I am blessed to see first-hand what it looks like when the body of Christ comes together to do a good work. It looks like abundance. It looks like hope. It looks like joy. It is beautiful!*

*-Pastor Shawna Bunnell, Outreach and Church Relations Manager, Chaddock Children's Foundation*



## THANK YOUS FROM CHADDOCK STUDENTS



Thank you so much for all of the wonderful things that you did to make our Christmas special. I haven't really ever had a good Christmas, so this was really awesome. I hope your Christmas was as flawless as mine! Happy New Year!

Dear Santa, I just want to say thank you for everything you and your elves work so hard to do every single year, and I am just so thankful.



## 2021 Mission and Giving Impact Report for First UMC

John Wesley said, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” First UMC took this message to heart. 2021 was an amazing year in the areas of mission and giving. You have partnered with us in many ways to spread the love of God to our world. The Mission Committee compiled this report of what we – First UMC – accomplished in 2021.

### Special offerings

- Easter offering – Old Kings Orchard and Midwest Mission Distribution Center (\$2,553)
- Christmas offering – Northeast Community Fund, Our Conference Our Kids, and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)(\$6,288)
- Faith in Action (\$50)
- UMCOR disaster relief (\$1,065)
- Rev. Ned Hawbecker scholarship fund (\$798)
- UMW Sunday offering (\$6,490)
- Church-wide special offerings (\$1,831)
- Boy Scouts Camping (\$1,000)

### Church use by outside groups

- Boy Scouts
- Red Cross blood drives
- AA
- Decatur Computer Club
- Beautify Decatur Coalition
- PEO
- Delta Kappa Gamma Chapter

### Collections of items

- Fill the Cart food items for Northeast Community Fund (quarterly)
- Sack lunch items for Good Samaritan Inn
- Santa Express - toiletry items for Chaddock
- Supplies for Johns Hill School
- Household items for Central Illinois Christians in Mission
- Gift cards for Cunningham Children’s Home and Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House
- Plastic lids for benches

### Community outreach events

- Giving Tuesday (\$7,800 donated in 2021)
- The Christmas Shoppe
- Church Street Church Walk
- Bells in Motion Christmas concert

### Monetary donations

- Dove Financial Assistance coordinator stipend (\$5,000)
- Liberia ministerial support (\$240)
- Missionary support for Jane Kies at Africa University and Dr. Lester Dornon in Nepal (\$1,000 each)
- Scholarships for our church family college students (\$4,500)
- Our Conference Our Kids (\$12,000)
- Dinner Downtown (\$577)
- Good Samaritan Inn (\$577)
- Baby Fold (\$200)
- Spero Family Services (\$200)
- Chaddock (\$200)
- Cunningham Children’s Home (\$600)
- Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House (\$300)

- Johns Hill School (\$300)
- UMW pledge to Mission (\$4,075)
- DOVE Christmas baskets (\$300)
- God's Shelter of Love (\$300)
- Central IL Christians in Mission (\$50)
- UMCOR (\$300)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters (\$50)
- Boys and Girls Club (\$50)
- Macon County CASA (\$50)
- Webster Cantrell Youth Advocacy (\$50)
- Miscellaneous (\$150)

#### Where FUMC served

- Midwest Mission Distribution Center
- Salvation Army bell ringing
- Board of Directors at Cunningham Children's Home
- Farm Progress Show food tents
- Northeast Community Fund food pantry (Youth)
- Good Samaritan Inn
- Cunningham Quilt Show

#### Mission activities in our community and the world

- Little Free Library
- Snacks and gift bags for teachers and staff at Johns Hill School
- Kid Life decorated the gift bags
- Candy for "Boo at MU" trunk-or-treat event
- Prayer Shawl Ministry (15 prayer shawls distributed in 2021)
- Birthday bags for children staying at Dove
- Amazon Smile for Midwest Mission Distribution Center
- Kroger card to support youth activities
- Baby shower hosted by Faith Links class
- Cards for shut-ins

#### Recognition as a Five Star Mission Church for 2020

The Five Star Mission Program encourages local churches in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference (IGRC) to grow in mission giving and mission outreach every year. Five Star churches receive an award certificate and special conference recognition of their giving beyond the local church within the United Methodist connection. First UMC received the certificate and recognition for 2020 in October 2021. The five star requirements are as follows:

- Paid 100% of our Conference Apportionments
- Donated to salary support for a General Board of Global Ministries Missionary
- Donated to at least (3) Special Sunday Offerings
- Donated to one or more General or UMCOR Advance(s)
- Donated to one or more IGRC Advance Special(s)

These are ways we have given and served as a church. This report in no way summarizes the hours and donations given individually by you, our church family, to organizations. We also apologize in advance if we omitted a church mission activity or event in which you participated.

Thank you for all of your support!