GATEWAY CHURCH

MONROE, IOWA

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NOVEMBER 15, 2026

Gateway Family,

This is my favorite time of year, and this season at Gateway is going to be a special one. Here's everything coming up, plus some exciting news about where God may be leading us.

UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS: OUR ADVENT SERIES

Starting November 29, we're spending the four Sundays of Advent unwrapping the greatest gift ever given. Each week we'll light a new Advent candle together and open up one part of the Christmas story.

NOV 29 • HOPE CANDLE
"The Power of Prophecy"
Before Bethlehem ever happened, God had already spoken it into history.

DEC 6 • PEACE CANDLE
"The Doctrine of the Incarnation"
The promise didn't stay a promise. It put on flesh and moved into the neighborhood.

DEC 13 • JOY CANDLE
"The Purpose of Redemption"
He didn't come just to be born among us. He came to buy us back.

DEC 20 • LOVE CANDLE
"The Doctrine of the Second Coming"
The love that sent Him the first time is the same love bringing Him back.

This is a great series to invite someone to. Join us Sundays at 9:00 AM, or catch the rebroadcast at 11:00 AM on Facebook, YouTube and gatewaychurchmonroe.com.

OUR HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Wednesday, November 18 | Blessing Box Packing Night, 6:30 PM
We're packing 6 Blessing Boxes this year: 2 for families in our church and 4 for families in our community. Come help in the church basement. It only takes about 30 minutes, and we'll deliver the boxes that same evening. Special envelopes are at the offering station if you'd like to give. Know a family who could use a blessing? Share their name with Caren Knight at 641-521-7985.

Wednesday, November 25 | Thanksgiving Eve Worship, 6:30 PM
Let's start Thanksgiving together with gratitude.

Saturday, November 28 | Church Christmas Decorating, 9:00 AM to Noon
All hands on deck! Come help us get the church ready for Christmas.

Sunday, November 29 | Advent Begins
Unwrapping Christmas kicks off with the Hope candle.

Saturday, December 5 | Kids & Youth Movie Night, 6:00 to 8:30 PM
Pizza, popcorn and *The Polar Express* in the church basement for 3rd grade and up. Friends are welcome! Parents can stay or drop off.

Sunday, December 6 | Communion Sunday & Brunch Potluck
Stay after worship for brunch, and bring a dish to share.

Saturday, December 19 | Cocoa & Candlelight on the Square, 6:00 to 7:30 PM
A free Christmas night for all of Monroe, with lights, cocoa and music on the square. This is one of the best chances we'll have all year to bless our town. Invite your neighbors!

Thursday, December 24 | Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 PM
The best night of the year to bring someone with you.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2027 AND BEYOND

Your leaders are starting to discuss and pray about our next steps for 2027 and beyond. We don't have all the answers yet, and that's exactly why we want you praying with us. Here's where we see things today.

God has given us a lot to be thankful for. We're the largest evangelical church in town. Many of you have real, personal friendships with people who don't yet know Jesus. And we have a solid core: our elders, our Creative Planning Team and three small groups that are working.

We also see some growing pains, and honestly, they're good ones. Our building seats about 80, and we're running around 60. We're getting close to full. Our children's and youth ministry is just getting started. And there's a place for many more of us to serve.

> ***A full building, a strong reputation and real relationships with people who don't know Christ aren't problems. They're signs that God is setting us up for what's next.***

So we're asking God for direction on some big possibilities:

- Adding a second Sunday morning service
- Finding a new worship space with room to grow
- Creating a fresh identity that reflects the church we're becoming
- Expanding our ministry to kids, youth, families and our whole town

IT STARTS WITH PRAYER

THURSDAY NIGHT PRAYER GROUP • BEGINS IN JANUARY • 6:30 TO 7:30 PM

Before we take a single step, we want to take it on our knees. Beginning in January, we're starting a Thursday Night Prayer Group from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. We'll pray for our community and for the next steps God has for Gateway. I'd love for you to be there. Come for the whole hour or just part of it. Every voice matters.

I'm so grateful to be your pastor, and I can't wait to see what God does through us this Christmas and in the year ahead.

Merry Christmas, Gateway!

Pastor Jon

Jon Dunwell, Pastor
GATEWAY CHURCH MONROE