

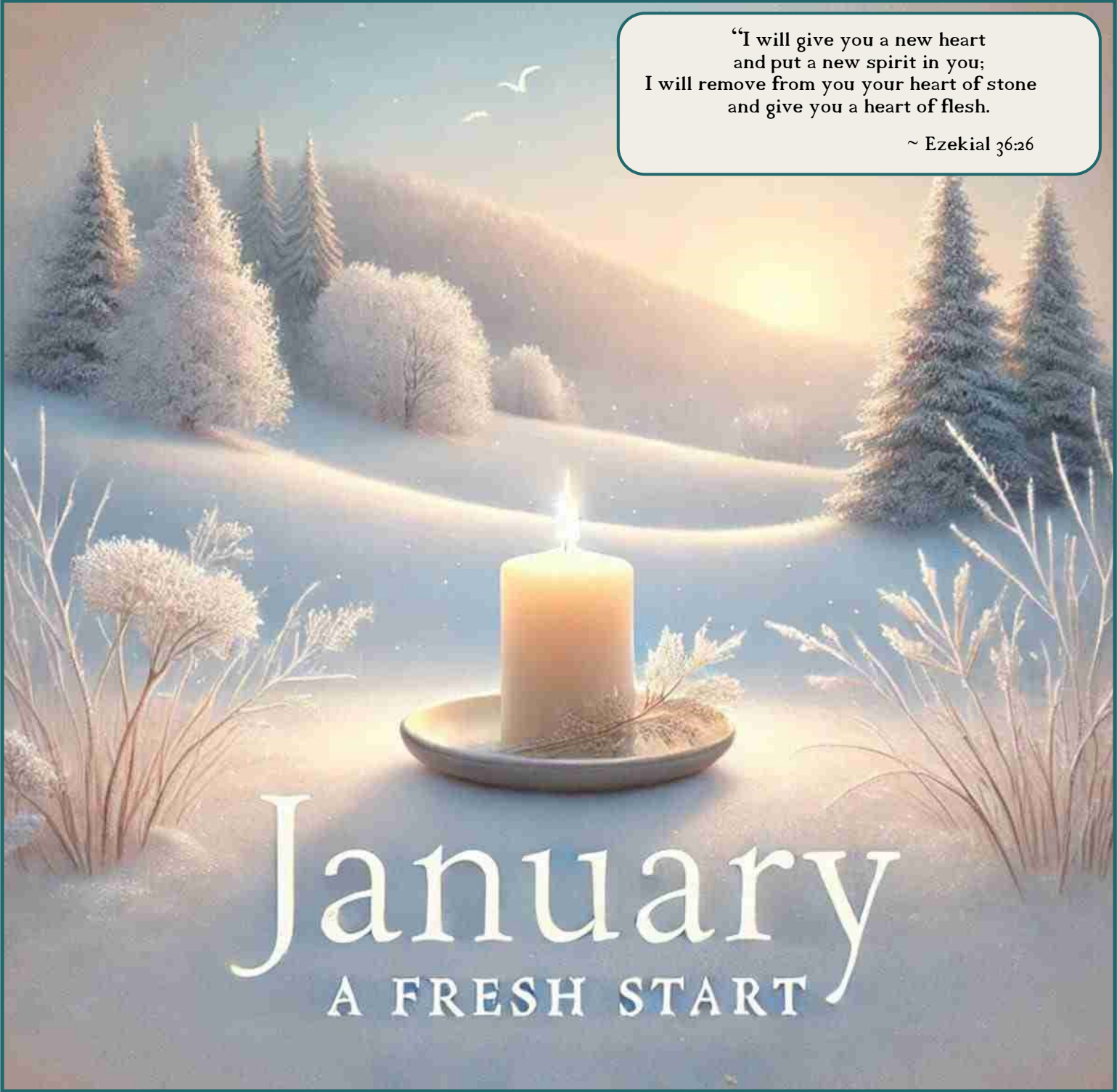
# Montrose Messenger

Newsletter for Montrose United Methodist Church

January 2026 Volume 1

“I will give you a new heart  
and put a new spirit in you;  
I will remove from you your heart of stone  
and give you a heart of flesh.

~ Ezekiel 36:26



January  
A FRESH START

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## Pastor's Column

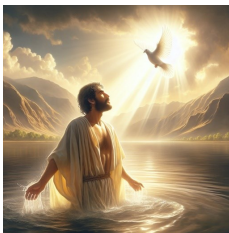
### ***A New Year's Dawn: Carrying the Light Forward***



As we step across the threshold of a new year, we often find ourselves yearning for a fresh start, a new clarity of purpose. The deep, quiet darkness of these winter mornings can remind us of the uncertainties that lie ahead. Yet, it is precisely in this season that we are invited to remember the profound proclamation of John's Gospel: that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This Word, John tells us, became flesh and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus Christ, the true light that gives light to everyone. He is the dawn that scatters every shadow, offering a clarity and hope that can frame our entire year.

This foundational Light, Jesus, is most fully understood in His gracious presence among us. We see this illustrated powerfully at the Jordan River, where Jesus—though without sin—humbly submits to baptism.

In this act, the heavens open, and the Father's voice affirms His beloved Son. Here, we see that true, divine power is revealed in humble solidarity and

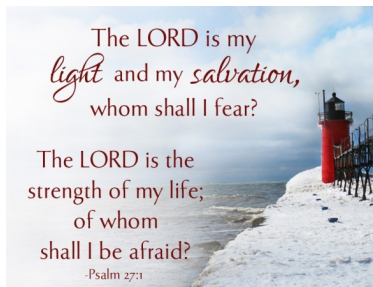


loving presence. Jesus meets us in our ordinary moments, sanctifies our new beginnings, and demonstrates that God's ultimate power is expressed through identification and love, setting a pattern for how we are to be present with one another.

Such a calling naturally propels us outward with purpose. The prophet Isaiah echoes this mission, speaking of a servant called not only to restore Israel but to be "a light for the Gentiles," to bring God's salvation "to the ends of the earth."

This is the justice the Light brings: a comprehensive healing that lifts up the broken and reaches the forgotten. In Jesus, this prophecy finds its fulfillment. As His followers, we are now enlisted in this work of restorative justice—to be reflectors of His light that pushes back darkness in all its forms, offering hope, dignity, and God's shalom to a waiting world.

So, as this January unfolds, let our collective resolution be this: to consciously carry the light of Christ. Let us seek, as the Psalmist did, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives, to gaze on His beauty, and to find our strength and courage in His faithful presence. In the coming year, may we be a community that looks to Jesus, the morning star, in each new dawn. May we embody His gracious presence with one another, and actively share the light of His justice and love. For the Lord, revealed to us in Jesus, is our light and our salvation—whom shall we fear? Wishing you a year illuminated by His hope, purpose, and peace.



With Love and Blessings,  
Pastor Mark Schlasner

Email: [am.umc.pastor@gmail.com](mailto:am.umc.pastor@gmail.com)  
Phone/Text: (763) 656-3490



### **January Worship Theme**

#### **"A New Year's Dawn: Carrying the Light Forward"**

**Sunday, January 4, 2026**

**~ Epiphany Sunday ~**

**Communion Sunday**

**Communion Steward:** Christie Illies

**Message:** "Seeing the Light"

**Scripture:** John 1:1-18

**Sunday, January 11, 2026**

**~ Baptism of the Lord Sunday ~**

**Message:** "Power of Presence"

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17

**Sunday, January 18, 2026**

**Special Giving Sunday**

**~ Human Relations Day ~**

**Message:** "Give You as a Light"

**Scripture:** Isaiah 49:1-7

**Sunday, January 25, 2026**

**Message:** "Carrying the Light"

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:1, 4-9



### **A Message From W.C.C.A. Wright County Community Action**

WCCA thanks you for your continued donations to the food shelf. We will continue to use the guide of items that we go through, using a list for each month throughout the year. January's focus is Baby Items, but those pantry food staples are always needed too.

#### **January: Baby Items**

#### ***"Open Your Heart Campaign"***

**Diapers  
Baby wipes  
Baby food  
Baby lotion  
Baby wash  
Baby formula**



Thank you for your donations!  
Tammy Prestidge  
Food Shelf/Thrift Store Coordinator





## PRAYER PAGE

The Joys & Concerns  
Lifted in December

### Grieving with Families

† **The Sharon McCormick Family.** Sharon, a former class-mate of Carol Prestidge's, passed away.

† **The Tony Spreeman Family.** Tony, Allen & Ronda Spreeman's son, passed away 12/12 after battling cancer.



### Our Friends at Home....

Gloria Adickes  
John Hylland



### Lifting in Our Prayers...

Travelers driving in winter weather conditions.

**Vivian Hanson**, Kim Wagner's co-worker Mary Krohn's Mom. Hospitalized 11/26 with heart failure. Her family visited her on 12/6 to celebrate her 92nd birthday and she passed away 12/21.



**Allan Malerich**, had surgery 12/15 for two small brain bleeds. *UPDATE:* surgery went well, but Allan is having bad headaches.

**Dave Marketon family of Howard Lake**, a fire on 12/17 destroyed their calf barn, equipment, and killed 40 calves. It's a miracle 1 calf survived. A Go Fund Me page has been set-up. [www.gofundme.com/f/help-rebuild-a-farmers-barn-after-fire](http://www.gofundme.com/f/help-rebuild-a-farmers-barn-after-fire)

**Russ Johnson**, hospitalized for 3 days with norovirus, and **Pam Johnson** home fighting an upper respiratory illness.

**Mary Ovall**, having surgery to replace her pacemaker battery after Christmas.

**Those grieving during the holiday season.**

**Sandy Dmytryszyn**, hospitalized while in Florida visiting her son. Not sure if a heart attack, but will see a heart specialist.

### Blessings & Celebrations

**Alyssa Prestidge**, playing with the Buffalo Community Orchestra 12/7!



**Neighbors helping neighbors**, plowing and shoveling snow for people less able.

**Thankful for the Phoenix Learning Center students**, their volunteer hours at FE-ED and the gift of the Holiday Planter.

**Isabella Johnson, Alyssa Prestidge, and Hunter Reinhart** playing at two Buffalo High School concerts 12/15!

**Mike Wagner**, officially retired 12/11!

**Don Danford's spirit lives in the church!** The wooden signs Don made for the entryway mysteriously fell off the wall 12/16!



*We celebrate all the special Birthdays & Anniversaries in December!*

Sunday,  
January 25th  
11:45 am - 1:30 pm



## FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON FOR ISABELLA JOHNSON



The Church Council is sponsoring a fundraiser luncheon for Isabella Johnson to help her with costs for her trip to France March 25th to April 4th! (Costs can exceed \$5,000) Belle, and several other students, are part of the French Foreign Student Exchange Program at BHS.

**We'll be serving Chili, Soup, French Bread, Tossed Salad, Desserts and Beverages.**

All donations go to support Belle.

**NOTE:** There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall if you'd like to donate food items towards this fundraiser.



**Montrose Firefighter's Relief Association Prime Rib or Shrimp Dinner**

**Saturday  
February 7, 2026  
5pm - 8pm  
Montrose Community Center**

**\$25 per Dinner  
\$5 Kids Corn Dog  
Dinner Tickets will be sold at the Door**

- Gun Raffle tickets \$10
- Silent Auction held during dinner with various items to bid on.

## Save The Date Breakfast Fundraiser For Alyssa Prestidge

**Sunday, February 22nd  
9:30 am - 10:15 am**

Hannah Circle is sponsoring a Breakfast Fundraiser for Alyssa Prestidge to help her with costs to attend the 2026 Aquatennial Week. The costs to attend can exceed \$1,500 with hotels, meals, dresses, etc. so we hope you will all come out and support her!

We'll have French Toast Bakes, Egg Bakes, Sausage, Fresh Fruit, Juice, Milk and Coffee.

All donations go to support Alyssa.



## Outreach Committee Update



Look for an update from our Outreach Committee in the next newsletter.

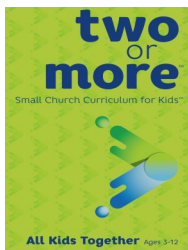
We're working on several initiatives:

1) Reignite our church as a resource for WCCA, Love INC, the Health Department, Rivers of Hope and more. 2) A fundraiser dinner for *Rivers of Hope* to build awareness and a stronger partnership with our congregation. 3) A gift card program to manage and address the growing needs in our community for food and gas.

Happy New Year! Diane Folkestad, Meri Ault & Pastor Mark

## Sunday School News!

The Sunday School class enjoyed going to see the animated movie, "**DAVID**" after church on Sunday, December 21st, learning more about David's humble beginnings as a shepherd boy, becoming the King of Israel, battling Goliath, and his complex relationship with King Saul. It was a very good movie and we'd recommend seeing it with your children or grandkids!



The class will continue the curriculum **TWO OR MORE**, following Quarter 2 lessons: **TRUSTING GOD, AMAZING LOVE, and the SERMON ON THE MOUNT: FOLLOWING JESUS**. This curriculum has been working well; providing the Point of the Lesson, a Key Verse, Story and Scripture, Games, Crafts, and of course a snack! All children ages 3-13 are welcome to join us Sundays at 9:30 am.

**\*\*NO SUNDAY SCHOOL JANUARY 18TH\*\***

Angie Ferrell - Christian Education Director  
Call/Text: (763) 442-4876



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Youth Group will meet on the third Wednesdays of the month at 5:30 pm with locations announced.

The next Youth Group meeting  
Is Wed., January 21st at 5:30 pm  
We'll be meeting at the **STARBUCKS**  
on Hwy. 25 next to Chipotle.  
Be ready to make plans for 2026!



Your Youth Group Leaders,  
Pastor Mark, Angie & Kim

## UWF Hannah Circle Update



United  
Women  
in Faith

The Hannah Circle invites you to join us the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 pm.

**Our next meeting is Monday,  
January 19th at 6:30 pm.**

At our December meeting our program focused on Love and how to share hospitality in a hurting world. Our Scripture reading was I John chapter 4. To summarize - it teaches believers to test all spiritual teachings by checking if they confess Jesus came in the flesh, because false prophets deny this: the greater truth is demonstrated by Him sending His Son, so Christians must love one another, casting out fear, as love proves they know God and are in Him, while those who don't love don't know Him.

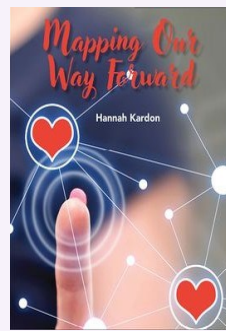
We also learned about "fractals" (described by Adrienne Maree Brown) which is a never ending pattern created by representing a simple process over and over again. In nature this can be found in patterns of succulents, pinecones, snowflakes, trees and more!

Carol Becker created an ice wreath based on fractals, using items she found in nature in her backyard. Leaves, pinecones, evergreen branches, dried flowers, and even some orange peels. Angie asked Carol if the ice wreath was considered to be a "craft"?



(Inside joke, as we know how much Carol loves crafts!)

As we focused on the ice wreath we were reminded of our program year "Together" in 2025.



We'll start our January meeting with the new UWF Program book, "**Mapping Our Way Forward**", which is about finding our way, mapping our plans, and holding on to the balance of grounding and flowing as we do it. In the midst of the uncertainties that surround us, we can map our way forward into the unknown by holding on to God and our core values, letting them keep us grounded as we face each challenge.

After our program, we move into the business and planning part of our meeting. As always, you are free to join us for the program, the business meeting, or both. We try to keep the meetings to one-hour. Our meetings are open to all women in the congregation and we'd love for you to join us and see what we do!

Our next **Outreach Mission** will be preparing and serving a meal for **Love INC's Fresh Start Program in April 2026**.

Please contact us with any questions, comments or suggestions for the group at:  
[montrosemmnw@gmail.com](mailto:montrosemmnw@gmail.com)



## FE-ED Update



### FE-ED Food Drop Report for December 23, 2025

We were blessed with volunteers and plenty of wonderful food for this Christmas time food drop. The day was bright with the sun shining and it felt especially nice after November's cold and rainy food drop.

We had the students from the Phoenix Learning Center there to help us. We were so grateful for their sunny personalities and the work they provided. We had an exceptional amount of extra potatoes this time and the boxes were overflowing and very heavy!

The semi driver for Second Harvest Heartland was scheduled to arrive at 12:30 pm, but arrived at 10:30 am so it was a bit of a scramble to gather volunteers and get everything unloaded!

Grace Place provided many, many packages of hot dogs and chicken. These items are especially appreciated and the hot dogs were a perfect item to distribute since school kids are on Christmas break.

Our Phoenix student liaisons, Deb and Maggie, along with Grace Place provided Christmas bags for the students. FE-ED gave them Gatorade. The students gave Grace Place a beautiful holiday arrangement, and gave Montrose UMC a Christmas evergreen planter for Christmas. These are great kids!

We had 26 volunteers at this drop totaling 114 hours of service.

#### The Community Contributed to the drop:

975 Lbs. Monticello Help Center  
650 Lbs. Buffalo Food Shelf

#### December Statistics:

- 8,893 lbs. of food from SHH
- 155 Families served
- 437 Individuals served
- 42 Veterans served
- 5 First time visitors
- 13 Communities served



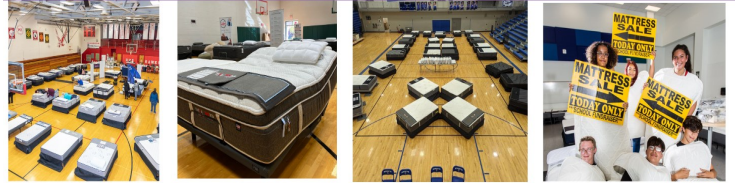
**The FE-ED Committee Members and Volunteers wish everyone a Happy New year!**  
**We'd love for more folks to join us on distribution days to see what we do!**

**The next food drop is Tuesday, January 27th**

*Respectfully submitted by Pam Johnson, Secretary*

## BUFFALO HIGH SCHOOL BAND MATTRESS FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY JANUARY 17, 2026  
10AM - 5PM @ BUFFALO HIGH SCHOOL



**WE BRING THE SHOWROOM TO THE SCHOOL**

### MATTRESS FUNDRAISER FOR BUFFALO HIGH SCHOOL BAND SUMMER TRIP 2026

**This is their largest  
fundraiser of the year and they need your support!**

**DO YOU NEED A NEW  
MATTRESS, OR DOES SOMEONE YOU KNOW?**

**Please see Isabella Johnson or Hunter Reinhart  
For more information.**

## Finance Update



Just a quick update from the finance team. First, thank you for your giving in 2025. Finance statements will be distributed in the next couple of weeks. I will have a full update on where we finished in 2025, details on our Advent Fundraiser, and the 2026 Budget in the February newsletter.

#### **November Total Income \$7,453.58**

##### **Total General Fund (designated giving) \$5,783.47**

This includes Palabra Viva rent \$550.00, Apportionment Giving \$646.97, RaiseRight income \$136.65 and other.

##### **Total Building Fund Giving Income \$1,670.11**

This is designated giving and "Hospitality Treat" receipts.

#### **November Total Expenses \$8,996.10**

This includes Salary items of \$4,183.28 (for pastor, secretary, janitor, pianist, and all benefit costs). Other costs and Building expenses were \$4,812.82 which includes utilities, maintenance agreements, and insurance.

As always, please reach out to me with any questions.

Kelly Rux, Financial Secretary  
(952) 221-8659





# Advent Season 2025



The sopranos of the Chancel Choir sing *"Some Children See Him"* at Our December 21st worship service. **Pictured above:** L-R: Sherry Oval, Angie Ferrell, and Ricki Malerich.



**Right:** Alyssa Prestidge plays special music on the piano at our December 14th worship service during our offering, *"Good King Wenceslas"*.



**Pictured above:** At our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, we wait in wonder for the Christ Child to be Born.



The Jubilant Ringers Hand Bell Choir "ring" in the advent season. Not pictured, the Jubilant Ringers played a beautiful Christmas Carol Medley at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. (Go to our FACEBOOK page to see this Christmas Eve performance and service.)

**Pictured right:**  
(L-R Back Row: Kelsey Marquette, Linda Marquette. Middle Row: Kelly Rux, Sonya Tourville, Diane Mumford-Sohns. Front Row: Alyssa Prestidge, Judy Mumford-Torres. Bell Choir Director: Jacque Vanderlinde



**Happy New Year  
2026!**





**NEXT FE-ED FREE FOOD DROP**  
**Tues., Jan. 27th 2 pm until gone**  
[Montrose Community Center](#)  
 Drive-thru pick-up on a first come-  
 first serve basis while quantities last.  
**NO COST - ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <b>Sunday, January 25th</b> <b>11:45 am—1:30 pm</b> <b>Fundraiser Luncheon for Isabella Johnson's</b> <b>March 2026 Foreign Exchange Student Trip to France!</b>				<b>1</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Bible Study (S)	<b>2 RAISE RIGHT ORDER DAY</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Music (S)	<b>3</b> 4-9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship Service (S/F)
<b>4 COMMUNION &amp; EPIPHANY SUNDAY</b> 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Coffee & Fellowship (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	<b>5</b> 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (K)	<b>6</b> 7 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>7</b> 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>8</b> 6:30 pm Franklin Friends 4H Club (C) 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Bible Study (S)	<b>9</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Music Practice (S)	<b>10 9:30 am Advent Decoration take down</b> 4-9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship Service (S/F)
<b>11 BAPTISM OF THE LORD SUNDAY</b> 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Coffee & Fellowship (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	<b>12</b> 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (K) 7-9 pm Palabra Viva School of Ministry (C)	<b>13</b> 7 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>14</b> 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>15</b> 6:30 pm Cub Scouts (K) 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Bible Study (S)	<b>16 RAISE RIGHT ORDER DAY</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Music Practice (S)	<b>17 10 am - 5 pm BHS MATTRESS SALE</b> 4-9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship Service (S/F)
<b>18 SPECIAL GIVING SUNDAY "HUMAN RELATIONS SUNDAY"</b> <b>**NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**</b> 9:30 am Coffee & Fellowship (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) <b>11:45 am Church Council (C)</b> 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	<b>19 MLK DAY NO BOY SCOUTS</b> <b>6:30 pm Hannah Circle (F)</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva School of Ministry (C)	<b>20 12 pm FE-ED Planning Mtg. (MUMC)</b>	<b>21 5:30 pm Youth Group (Starbucks)</b>	<b>22</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Bible Study (S)	<b>23</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Music Practice (S)	<b>24</b> 4-9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship Service (S/F)
<b>25</b> 9:30 am Sunday School (C) 9:30 am Coffee & Fellowship (F) 10:30 am Worship Service (S) <b>11:45 am Luncheon Fundraiser for Isabella Johnson (F)</b> 6 pm AA Meeting (C)	<b>26</b> 6:30 pm Boy Scouts (K) 7-9 pm Palabra Viva School of Ministry (C)	<b>27 12 pm - 1:30 pm FE-ED Set-up 2 pm FE-ED Distro (MCC)</b> 7 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>28</b> 7 pm Choir Rehearsal (S)	<b>29</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Bible Study (S)	<b>30 RAISE RIGHT ORDER DAY</b> 7-9 pm Palabra Viva Music Practice (S)	<b>31</b> 4-9:30 pm Palabra Viva Worship Service (S/F)



**BIRTHDAYS!**  
 3rd-Cheryl Goode  
 4th-Heather Parks  
 4th-Ricki Malerich  
 8th-Jean Kuhn  
 8th-Tracy Johnson

8th-Kelly Prestidge  
 11th-Kelly Rux  
 13th-Sandy Dmystryszyn  
 18th-Pam Johnson  
 18th-Ryley Ashbaugh

**ANNIVERSARIES!**  
 7th-Jean & Jim Kuhn  
 12th-Kim & Mike Wagner



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Happy New Year 2026

[www.montroseumc.com](http://www.montroseumc.com)  
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## Montrose United Methodist Church



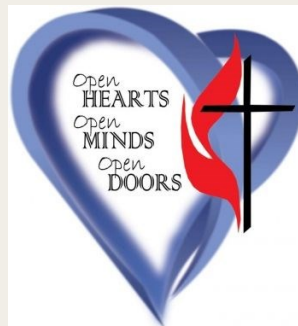
**FE-ED**  
**For Each and**  
**Every Day**  
**(Free food distributions**  
**on the 4th Tuesday of**  
**every Month)**

**NEXT FREE FOOD DISTRIBUTION:**  
**Tuesday, January 27th**  
**Starting at 2 pm ~ Drive thru Event**  
**Montrose Community Center**

FE-ED is a partnership between Montrose United Methodist Church and Grace Place, with support from SHH (Second Harvest Heartland) and many others in our community.

**Volunteers are needed & welcome starting at**  
**12 pm to pack food boxes!**

Go to the FEED website for more information:  
**[www.fe-ed.org](http://www.fe-ed.org)**



*We invite you*  
*to join us on*  
*Sunday Mornings.*  
*All are welcome!*

*Sunday School 9:30 am*  
*Coffee & Fellowship 9:30 am*  
*Worship Service 10:30 am*

*Watch our Worship Service Live on*  
*Facebook.com*  
*Search Montrose United Methodist*  
*Church (Minnesota)*

*Reverend Mark Schlasner, Pastor*