



*"I am the vine, you are the branches.  
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;  
for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5*

**Newsletter • December 2025**



Happy Advent! Happy Christmas! As we approach the end of the year, we look back with gratitude for all that God has done through our church family. Your prayers, service, and generosity have helped us continue our mission of love, and serve God and our neighbors as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your generous giving toward the ministries and general operation of the church. Some members choose to make a special gift at the end of the year, and this contribution can also provide a tax benefit when completed or postmarked by December 31. Here are the ways you can give: in person during worship time, online giving option, or mail it to the church (P.O. Box 25, Baldwin City, KS 66006) Additional options are stock and estate gifts.

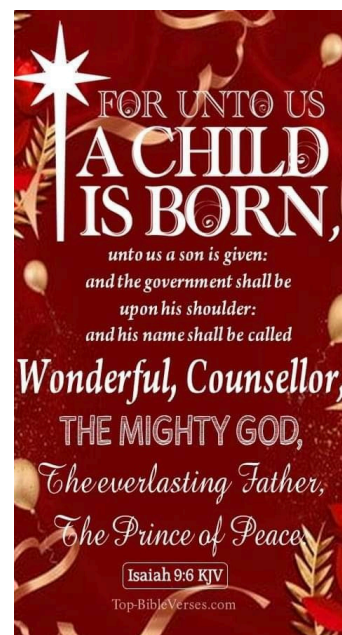
At the beginning of the new year, our church will send your annual giving statement for your records.

Thank you so much for your continued faithfulness and generosity. Your giving makes a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community, and helps us share the love of Jesus Christ with our community and beyond. We are deeply grateful for your partnership with our church and God.

May God bless you and your family. Have a merry Christmas!

Pastor Ezekiel

Baldwin First and Ives Chapel UMC





## Poinsettia & Community Emergency Fund Donations

If you would like to donate a poinsettia for the altar in December or contribute to the Community Emergency Fund, please complete the order form found in the narthex. The cost of a poinsettia is \$15.00. Please place an order form with payment in the offering plate until December 7.



## Festival of Lights

December 6 will be a festive day in Baldwin! Along with the city's Festival of Lights, Baldwin First will have two special events.

## Soup Supper

United Women in Faith will host the annual soup supper prior to the Festival of Lights. Please join us in Fellowship Hall for a variety of soups and desserts from 4:30 to 6 p.m. All are welcome; donations are appreciated!

## Living Nativity

Come view the holy family and their guests at the living nativity from 5-6 p.m.



## No Advent Bible Study December 7

Due to the Charge Conference in Ottawa on December 7, there will not be an Advent Bible Study. The study will meet on December 14 from 4 - 6 p.m.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship	9:30 am
Sunday School	10:45 am
BLAST JH/HS Group	
Adult Bible Studies	10:45 am
Young Adult Bible Study	10:45 am

Childcare service for Pre-K and under is available in the lower level across from Fellowship Hall.

Children's bags can be borrowed during service. They may be found in the narthex.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### December 6

Soup Supper, 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Living Nativity, 5 - 6:00 p.m.

Festival of Lights, 6:00 p.m.

### December 7

Charge Conference, Ottawa, 2:30 p.m.

No Bible Study due to Charge  
Conference

Ives Chapel Cookie Exchange, 2 p.m.

Marlene Courtney's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
Celebration, 2 - 4 p.m.

### December 13

UMF Christmas Brunch 9:30 a.m.

### December 14

Children's Sunday

Cookies after Service

Advent Choir Sings

Advent Bible Study, 4 - 6 p.m., library

### December 21

Advent Choir Sings

### December 24

Christmas Eve Services  
Baldwin First 5 & 11 p.m.

Ives Chapel 7 p.m.



## Missions Team

The Baldwin Community Food Pantry is grateful for the outpouring of support from so many individuals, businesses, organizations and schools! The Douglas County Extension Office and Master Gardeners dropped off 262 items on November 20 and later that afternoon a donation of over 1,800 items was received from the Baldwin Primary and Intermediate Centers. The Baldwin Jr. High food drive was delivered the next day; we received 258 items and cash. Those helping to receive and stock the pantry shelves were: John and Marilee Beins, Susan Butell, Kelley Bethell-Smith, Nancy Arnold, Martha Harris, Patty Lenning, May Gorton, Fred and Joan Toot, Marlene Barber, Mark Reynolds, Roger Boyd, and Andrea, Jonah, Hudson and Kellen Most.

We are anticipating receiving donations in December from food drives sponsored by Baker University, the Baldwin State Bank, the B.L.A.S.T. crew, and the Chamber of Commerce.

## Children's Sunday

On December 14, "Our Finest Gifts", presented by the children, BLAST Crew, and Advent Choir will take place during service.

Join us following the children's service for cookies in Beeks chapel.

## Let's Celebrate Marlene!

Let's help Marlene Courtney celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday! An open house will be held on December 7 at 1107 Fremont Street from 2 - 4 p.m.

## Cookie Exchange

Ives Chapel has invited us to a cookie exchange on December 7 at 2 p.m. Bring two dozen homemade cookies. RSVP to Amy @ 785-766-5849.

## Brand New Lift Chair - Free!

Please contact Pastor Ezekiel if you know someone who would like a free lift chair!

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Jilly Dodge, Marcia O'Neil,  
Amy Berg, Cynthia Perez  
Barbara Pressgrove, Nursery  
Angela Murry  
BLAST Leader (JH/HS)

## TECHNOLOGY TEAM

Dr. Frank Perez, Mixer/Editor  
Ryan Berg, Worship Technology

## WORSHIP TEAM

Pam Sharp, Piano  
Madelynn Knisely, Vocals  
Cynthia Perez, Vocals  
Donna Curran  
Kathleen Thomas

## MISSIONS TEAM

Susan Butell  
Nancy Arnold  
Marilee Beins  
John Beins  
Coleen Burgess  
Kelley Bethell-Smith  
Martha Harris  
Robin Schrack  
Corey Schrack



# Hanging of the Greens & Chili Feed

As always, Baldwin First looks beautiful for the Advent Season! Sunday, November 30, was a special time for fellowship, food, and tradition.

Thank you to the Currans for organizing the decorations and the Hospitality/Fellowship Committee for the chili lunch. The lunch could not have been possible without the special food donations from many of our church's wonderful cooks!

We appreciate all of those who helped make this tradition a perfect start to the advent season!

This beautiful picture was taken by Donna Curran.



The final event of the day is always the young ones placing the animals in the stable.

Our children's ministry team did an amazing job providing activities to make our children feel a special part of this event.

# 2026 Advent Choir

Thank you for singing a beautiful message on the first Sunday of Advent! Just a reminder that we will NOT rehearse this Thursday or sing as a choir this next Sunday the 7th.

In the meantime, here is the remaining schedule:

- Thursday, December 11th: 6:30 pm rehearsal
- Sunday, December 14th: 8:45 am rehearsal for "Little Drummer Boy" with children's program assistance
- Thursday, December 18th: 6:30pm rehearsal
- Sunday, December 21st: 8:45 am rehearsal for "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

As always, please feel free to reach out with any questions. Thank you for the offering of your voices!

Kelley Bethell-Smith, Director

## Choir Members

Jan Boyd

Susan Butell

Doug Cheek

Monica Crouch

Donna Curran

Mike Curran

Kayla Curry

Tiffanie Kaiser

Cynthia Perez

Bruce Peterson

Diane Peterson

Barbara Pressgrove

Kathleen Thomas



**BFUMC**

BALDWIN FIRST  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*Advent Choir*

*"I want to walk as a child of the light . . ."*

**REHEARSALS**  
**THURSDAYS AT 6:30 P.M.**  
12/11, 12/18

**SINGING AT SERVICES**  
**SUNDAYS AT 8:45 A.M.**  
11/30, 12/14, 12/21

For questions,  
contact Kelley  
at 785-418-4051  
or email  
kelleybethell.smith  
@gmail.com



## B.L.A.S.T.

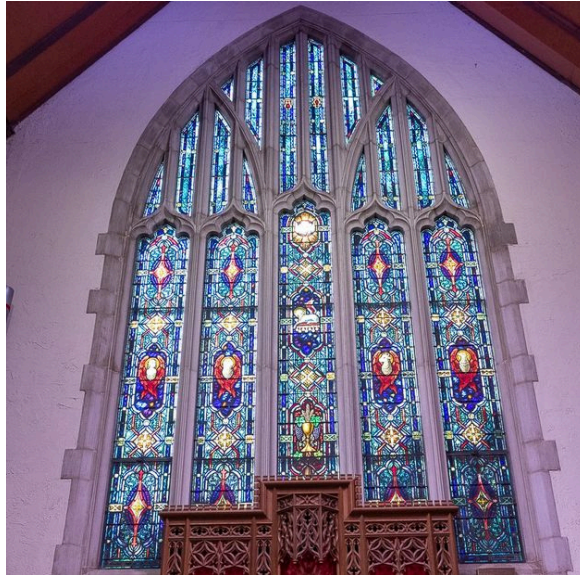


The B.L.A.S.T. crew is making birthday cake kits for the food pantry. Items needed are: disposable cake pans, cake mixes, frosting, candles, decorative items, and sprite. The sprite is used in place of egg and butter.

B.L.A.S.T. will not meet on December 21 and over the holiday break.

## The Chancel Window

"The Brick Church" was destroyed in a fire on November 30th, 1930. As part of the new church construction, 21 stained glass windows were commissioned, which included the chancel window with a total cost of \$2,000 from Jacoby Art Glass Company. The first service held in the church was the Baccalaureate service in the spring of 1932. The chancel window was the gift of the Epworth League institute which had met at Baldwin since 1911.



### A Window Speaks

The chancel window is deeply rooted in symbolism. The objects and icons hold meaning, and as each individual looks upon them they represent an idea. The window speaks to each of us differently. In viewing, may this chancel window speak to you every day with mute messages of aspiration, hope, comfort, and victory!

To see a detailed description of each of the objects and icons, visit the Baldwin First website by clicking on the Chancel Window picture above.

## Leadership Team

Doug Cheek, Chair  
Nancy Arnold  
Ryan Berg  
Mike Curran  
Christi Darnell  
Carolyn Groves  
Marcial O'Neil  
Pam Sharp  
Katherine Cook, Secretary  
Coleen Burgess, Finances

## CONTACT US

Rev. Ezekiel Koech, Pastor  
785-324-9174  
[ezekiel.koech@baldwinfirst.org](mailto:ezekiel.koech@baldwinfirst.org)

**Church Office**  
785-594-6612  
[office@baldwinfirst.org](mailto:office@baldwinfirst.org)

**Office Hours**  
Tuesday - Thursday  
10 am - 2 pm

**Website**  
[baldwinfirst.org](http://baldwinfirst.org)

**Social Media**  
[@baldwinfirstumc](https://www.instagram.com/baldwinfirstumc)



**BALDWIN FIRST**





Hi Baldwin First,

We are looking for volunteers to help us tell Jesus's story for the Bethlehem event at camp this December 5th, 6th, and 7th! We are located at 2577 Idaho Road, Ottawa, KS.

The Bethlehem Project is a live nativity that tells the entire story of Jesus from his birth to his resurrection. It is an amazing event run by volunteers and Chippewa staff. Last year, we served 1,038 people in one weekend, and we want to share this wonderful opportunity with our Chippewa Family!

We are looking for people to act, to serve as marketplace vendors, to donate cookie dough, to set up and tear down, and many other roles to make this event happen.

Thank you for your support!

-Camp Chippewa Staff

Join  
us at



December 5, 6, & 7  
2025

5:45pm – 8:30pm

**Come See a Living Christmas!**

- ❖ *Experience an immersive walking tour of the Christmas Story as depicted in scripture.*
- ❖ *Tours begin every 15 minutes, featuring a free 45-minute walking tour with Live Animals & More. Dress Warmly!*
- ❖ *Tours will not exceed 2 miles in hiking.*
- ❖ *Groups & Special Needs Welcome! Golf Carts can be reserved for individuals with limited mobility.*
- ❖ *Refreshments & Hospitality Provided*

Hosted at Camp Chippewa  
2577 Idaho Road, Ottawa, Kansas

For more information, Visit us:  
<https://bethlehemprojectrcoks.weebly.com/>

