



*"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*

baldwin first

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SO VERY
thankful
INCREDIBLY
grateful
UNBELIEVABLY
blessed

Newsletter • November 2025



As I see it . . .

It is time to prepare for "The Journey - Walking the Road to Bethlehem." As the days grow shorter and the nights stretch long, the Christian calendar enters one of its most beautiful and reflective seasons—Advent. Marking the four weeks before Christmas, Advent is a time of waiting, hope, and preparation for the coming of Christ—both His birth in Bethlehem and His promised return in glory.

The Spirit of Expectation

The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning 'coming' or 'arrival.' Just as the people of Israel waited with longing for the Messiah, Christians today use this season to prepare their hearts for Jesus' coming into the world. Advent invites us to pause amid the busyness of December and reflect on the deeper meaning of Christmas: God coming to dwell among us.

The Four Candles of the Wreath

One of the most recognizable symbols of Advent is the Advent wreath, a circle of evergreen branches symbolizing eternal life. Four candles—three purple and one pink—surround a central white candle known as the Christ candle. Each week, a new candle is lit:

1. Hope (Prophet's Candle) – reminding us of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Savior.
2. Peace (Bethlehem Candle) – symbolizing the peace Christ brings to the world.
3. Joy (Shepherd's Candle) – represented by the pink candle, calling us to rejoice in God's promises.
4. Love (Angel's Candle) – celebrating the boundless love revealed through Christ's birth.

On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the **Christ Candle** is lit, signifying the light of Christ breaking into the darkness.

A Season of Preparation

Advent is not only about looking back to the manger but also looking forward to the future. Christians await Christ's return when He will make all things new. This dual focus—past and future—invites us to live faithfully in the present, ready to welcome Christ into our hearts each day.

In a world filled with noise and haste, Advent teaches the holy art of waiting—waiting not with frustration, but with hopeful expectation. It reminds us that God's promises are sure, even when fulfillment seems delayed.

Feel free to observe Advent by lighting candles each Sunday, reading Scripture, or setting aside moments of quiet reflection and prayer. Some families create Advent calendars or perform small acts of kindness daily to share Christ's love in tangible ways. In our church, we will be having Advent Study for the four Sundays from 4-5 p.m. in the Library starting Sunday November 30 and finishing on December 21. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex area.

As we journey through the weeks ahead, may our hearts echo the ancient cry of the Church: **"Come, Lord Jesus."**

Have a happy Thanksgiving!

Pastor Ezekiel

UMW Turkey Dinner

The annual UMW Turkey Dinner will be November 8 from 5-7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Be sure to invite friends and family for this delicious meal



**UMW Annual
Turkey Dinner**

Where:
Baldwin United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall
8th & Grove, Baldwin City

Cost
Adult - \$18
8 & under - \$12
3 & under - Free

When:
November 8, 2025
5 to 7 pm

What: Turkey, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Cranberry OR orange jello salad, & Pies

Call in Orders for Take-Out
785-766-2587

Sharing Thanksgiving Blessings

Baker University is seeking families to host international students on Thanksgiving Day. Perhaps your table is large enough to welcome several students with whom you can share your culture and traditions. Contact Pastor Ezekiel if you are willing to open your home to students.

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2

All Saints Day, Holy Communion

November 4

Ives Chapel Election Day Chicken Noodle Dinner, 5 p.m.

November 5

Caregivers, 1 p.m.

November 8

Turkey Dinner, 5-7 p.m.

November 9

Children's Sunday

November 16

Baker Sunday

November 20

Widow / Widowers, 2 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 p.m.

November 23

No Sunday School or BLAST
Hanging of the Greens
Chili Feed, Noon

November 30

First Sunday of Advent
Advent Choir Sings
No BLAST
Advent Study, 4 p.m.

December 6

Soup Supper, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Living Nativity, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
Festival of Lights, 6:00 p.m.

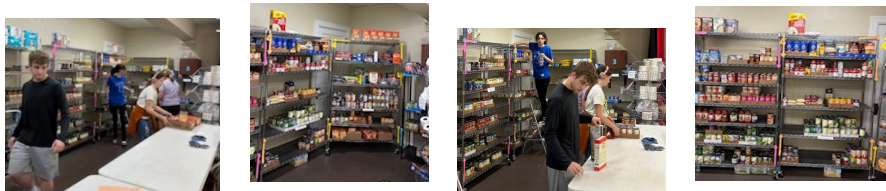
December 7

First Sunday of Advent
Advent Choir Sings
Charge Conference
Advent Study, 4 p.m.

Community Service

Baldwin High School juniors and seniors participated in a community service day on October 15. Several students came to the Community Food Pantry to help clean the shelves, check expiration dates, and restock. Many thanks to them for helping at the pantry!

The Baldwin State Bank will be hosting a food drive in November. Please drop off items at either bank location. Additionally, the Baldwin Intermediate Center and Chamber of Commerce will be hosting drives.



Missions Team

The Missions team served 93 meals at L.I.N.K. The meal consisted of pork loin, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, fruit salad, green salads, desserts, and milk. Brownies, cookies, cakes, and lemon bars were provided by Letha Williamson, Anne Westgate, Jeanne Stanley, Marcia O'Neil, Kay Kuhlman, Katherine Cook, and Nancy Arnold. Cooks, servers, and kitchen helpers were John and Marilee Beins, Roger and Nancy Arnold, Corey and Robin Schrack, Trish Batchelder, Kay Kuhlman, Katherine Cook, and Jill and Cara Dodge.

In 2025, the Missions team and church members served four times at L.I.N.K., serving 449 meals. There were 21 servers with many serving on multiple days.

The dates that we will serve at L.I.N.K. in 2026 are: February 28, April 25, August 29, and October 24.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is an event in which survivors of suicide loss come together to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience. The annual support gathering for Douglas County residents who have lost loved ones to suicide will be held at Baldwin First on Saturday, November 22 in the church library. All are welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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

TECHNOLOGY TEAM

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

WORSHIP TEAM

Keith Sandrock, Organ/Piano
Pam Sharp, Piano
Madelynn Knisely, Vocals
Cynthia Perez, Vocals
Donna Curran
Kathleen Thomas

MISSIONS TEAM

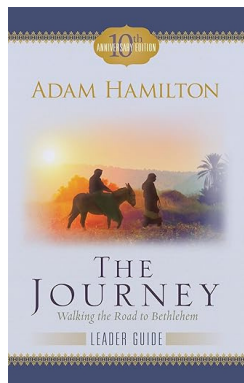
Susan Butell
Nancy Arnold
Marilee Beins
John Beins
Coleen Burgess
Kelley Bethell-Smith
Martha Harris
Robin Schrack
Corey Schrack

Advent Choir

It's almost time for the advent choir to begin practice. The first practice will be November 20. All are welcome and no previous experience is required for this group to make music together!



Advent Study



Join Pastor Ezekiel for an advent study, The Journey. Walking the Road to Bethlehem. Journey with Adam Hamilton as he travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in this fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. Using historical information, archaeological data, and a personal look at some of the stories surrounding the birth, the most amazing moment in history will become more real and heart-felt as you walk along this road.

The study will be held on November 30 and December 4, 11, and 18 at 4 p.m. in the library.

LOVE.SERVE.DISCIPLE.

Since 1855, the mission of Baldwin First UMC is to love and serve God and our neighbors as disciples of Jesus Christ.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Believing that all persons are created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ, the people of Baldwin First United Methodist Church understand that our neighbors include persons of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation and identity, economic or marital status, and physical and mental condition, and are welcome to participate in the life of our congregation.

CONTACT US

Rev. Ezekiel Koech, Pastor
785-324-9174
ezeziel.koech@baldwinfirst.org

Church Office
785-594-6612
office@baldwinfirst.org

Office Hours
Tuesday - Thursday
10 am - 2 pm

Website
baldwinfirst.org

Social Media
@baldwinfirstumc



Special Services for November

The worship team is excited to have two special services in November.

On November 9, the children will read scripture, liturgy, and other things. All third graders will be presented a Bible.

Baker University Sunday is November 16. Baker students will do the service and sermon.

November 30 is the first Sunday in Advent. Our advent choir, directed by Kelley Bethell-Smith, will sing.

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 plates until December 7.

Journeys Adult Class

The adult class Journeys will be using the book "The Carols of Christmas " by Alan Vermilye for our Advent study this year. We will be digging out rich truths from these carols:

"O Holy Night"

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

No singing required! 🎵. Sundays after church in Beeks Chapel at the back of the sanctuary! All are welcome to join us for one week, or more! There will probably be Christmas treats!

Leadership Team

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

Good and Gracious God,
We gather together, Lord, at this table, giving thanks for all that we have and all that we are. Bless the food before us, and the hands that prepared and harvested it, and the earth that nurtured it. Thank you for seeing us through difficult days and anxious nights, and being alongside us in our sorrows and victories. May this time together fill out hearts, strengthen our ties, and give us peace. Amen.



Hanging of the Greens

November 23 will see a busy morning at Baldwin First, and your help in Hanging of the Greens will be greatly appreciated. This is a beautiful tradition of our church and we hope you share in preparing for the Advent.

Once the sanctuary is prepared, plan to join us in Fellowship Hall for a chili feed complete with all the fixings. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex for those who would care to share sides or accompaniments. A child-friendly option will be available.



November 23, 2025

Right after Church service

Something for all ages to help with!

Children's activities and decorating of their tree.

JOBS

Carry of items up stairs

Putting the trees together

Candles and greenery in the windows

Hanging of the garlands above the Altars

Hanging of the garlands on the Stair rails

Fluffing of the bows

Hanging of the wreaths inside

Hanging of the wreaths outside

Placing of the candlesticks on the pews

Decorating of the candlesticks

Decorating of the Trees

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!



Soup Supper

1st Saturday in December

Festival of Lights

4:30 to 6 p.m.

First United Methodist Church



While November marks a celebration of Thanksgiving in the U.S., finding time to thank God is part of our daily discipline as United Methodists.

A Thanksgiving Prayer

(by Rev. Linda McDermott, First United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas)

God who loves us, who deserves our gratitude for so much that is good,

We offer our prayers of thanksgiving to you:

For the beauty of the earth — bright orange leaves mixed with green, a gentle rain, a spider's delicate web.

For friends, for family, even acquaintances who offer us kindness, who bring us laughter, who hold us to a higher standard. Lord of all that is good and nourishing to our well being, we give you thanks.

How we must try your patience with our pettiness!

Living Nativity

What would a hometown Christmas parade be without a living nativity? Ours can be viewed from 5 - 6 p.m. on December 6 on the northwest corner of the lawn. We have openings in the cast if you've ever thought of yourself as someone who would like to visit the Christ Child. Costumes are provided. Just let Trish Batchelder or Katherine Cook know to count you in.



ELECTION DAY CHICKEN NOODLE DINNER RETURNS NOVEMBER 4, 2025

**HOSTED BY IVES CHAPEL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN! THE ANNUAL ELECTION DAY CHICKEN NOODLE DINNER AT IVES CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS BACK ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, SERVING UP BALDWIN CITY'S FAVORITE COMFORT MEAL BEGINNING AT 5:00 P.M.

WHETHER YOU PLAN TO DINE IN OR CARRY OUT, THIS LONG-STANDING COMMUNITY TRADITION OFFERS A DELICIOUS WAY TO END ELECTION DAY WITH FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS. THE MEAL INCLUDES CLASSIC HOMEMADE CHICKEN AND NOODLES, SIDES, AND DESSERT — ALL PREPARED BY VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE THIS EVENT A LOCAL FAVORITE FOR GENERATIONS.

MEAL DONATIONS:
AGES 11-ADULT: \$10.00
AGES 10 AND UNDER: \$6.00

PROCEEDS FROM THE DINNER HELP SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS OF IVES CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, LOCATED AT 1018 MIAMI STREET IN BALDWIN CITY, KANSAS.

SO AFTER CASTING YOUR VOTE, SWING BY IVES CHAPEL FOR A WARM MEAL, FRIENDLY FACES, AND ANOTHER TASTE OF BALDWIN CITY TRADITION!

2025: HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

AS VETERANS DAY APPROACHES, THE BALDWIN CITY COMMUNITY IS ONCE AGAIN INVITED TO TAKE PART IN SWEATS FOR VETS 2025, A MEANINGFUL EFFORT TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY.

THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES DONATIONS OF NEW WARM CLOTHING FOR VETERANS IN NEED, INCLUDING JACKETS, HOODIES, HATS, GLOVES, AND UNDERWEAR. ALL CLOTHING MUST BE NEW, AND BOTH MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SIZES ARE WELCOME. MONETARY DONATIONS ARE ALSO ACCEPTED AND WILL BE USED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL ITEMS FROM LOCAL VENDORS.

COLLECTED ITEMS WILL BE DELIVERED TO THE COLMERY-O'NEILL VETERANS HOSPITAL IN TOPEKA ON NOVEMBER 10, IN HONOR OF VETERANS DAY.

DONATIONS MAY BE DROPPED OFF AT:

- ✓ **BALDWIN CITY LIBRARY**
- ✓ **VINLAND VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH
1724 N 692 ROAD**
- ✓ **MARGARET BARNES' RESIDENCE, 727 E 1650 RD**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO PREFER TO ARRANGE A PICKUP OR WOULD LIKE A DONATION RECEIPT CAN CONTACT MARGARET BARNES AT 913-522-4094.

THIS ANNUAL INITIATIVE IS A SIMPLE YET POWERFUL WAY TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE PROUDLY SERVED — A REMINDER THAT THEIR SACRIFICES ARE NOT





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!

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 have a few ways you can help below by using the information below to sign up:

We are looking for people to play acting roles, marketplace vendors, cookie dough donations, set up and tear down help, 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://bethlehemprojectfrccoks.weebly.com/>