



*"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 • February 2025

Pastor's Corner



As I see it... We are a nation who loves to admire those we consider great, be it a singer, basketball player, NFL player, movie star, or even a politician. We also have a habit of imitating those we celebrate, sometimes taking on their 'swagger', and even arguing over who is the greatest

that if you cause even one of his little ones to sin, it would be better for a large millstone to be tied around your neck and for you to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (18:6) Jesus then goes on to say this: "See that you do not look down on one of the little ones. For I tell you their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven." (18:10-11).

Children were and are important to Jesus. And as the 'body of Jesus' in the world today, we, too, must take on the mantle of both protecting and teaching children. Below are some ways we might join together as God's people to do so.

1. Encourage kids you know to come to church on Sunday.
2. Talk to Jill Dodge at Baldwin First UMC or Kathleen Winkleman at Ives Chapel, or me about how we might help those children and youth in need.

We are a nation who loves to admire those we consider great, and the greatest of all is Jesus Christ. May we follow him by teaching his children all that he has taught us, and may our prayers put courage in our hearts and wings on our feet to do His work.

Sharom!

Pastor Ezekiel

The habit of imitation appears to be human nature. Even in Jesus' time, his disciples did the same. The gospel of Matthew says, "...came to Jesus and asked, 'who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?'" (18:1) The gospel reports that Jesus calls a child to his midst and says, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." (18:3-5). You mean humble? Seriously? In American culture today? Where foul language and trash-talking to put another down is not only accepted, but thought of as a "respected" art form? Yes, the sin of pride is rampant and, in many ways, we seem to celebrate the cultures' 'heroes' victories more so than Jesus' victory on the cross over sin and death. And children learn what they see and live. Therefore, it's important to make sure that they see and live in the Light of Christ. And speaking of Christ, Jesus would go on to say

Children's Ministry

The children's Sunday School class has been reading from the Gospel and learning about the events after Jesus was born. We have learned about people spreading the Good News and how we can spread the Good News also!



B.L.A.S.T. Crew...stands for Believing, Loving And Serving Together

BLAST is a junior/senior high school group that meets each Sunday after church worship. The BLAST program is a combination of Bible study and service to the church family and community. Their goal is to give the kids a chance to continue learning about God's word and to understand they are important contributors to their community. And, we always have a BLAST!

Below are just a few things the group has done this year:

- Helped with taking down and storing the Christmas decorations
- Starting a kids' book drive to refresh the Little Free Library for Food Pantry families
- Making hot drinks for the adult Sunday School classes on a very cold morning
- Discussed the process and meaning of Confirmation in the United Methodist church. Several of our older members have volunteered to serve as liturgists in future services.

Here are some of the projects B.L.A.S.T. Crew have done in the past:

- Visited Vintage Park to engage residents in games
- Organized a Santa's Workshop for Food Pantry Families to fill stockings for their children
- Created an Easter Basket Shop for Food Pantry Families to assemble baskets for their children
- Organized Bring-a-Friend to Church activities for the children's Sunday School classes
- Helped promote Missions Team activities

Contact Angela Murray at murrayslanding@gmail.com or Brad Peterson at peteresonbrad@hotmail.com for more information.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Doug Cheek, Chair
Nancy Arnold, Lay Member
Ryan Berg, Technology
Frank Perez, Technology
Mike Curran
Christi Darnell
Carolyn Groves, Financial Secretary
Marcia O'Neil
Pam Sharp
Glen Sharp, Finance Chairperson
Katherine Cook, Secretary
Coleen Burgess, Finances

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact the church office, Rev. Ezekiel Koech, or Linda Ballinger for pastoral care needs and to be added to the prayer list.

Linda Ballinger,
Care Giving Team Leader,
913-980-3831

Rev. Ezekiel Koech, Pastor
785-324-9174

Let us remember and pray for:

Bob Courtney Family &
Kathleen Thomas Family, Carolyn,
Jennifer, Scott, Tom, Russ, Otis,
Cyrus, Judith, Louise, Mary, Donna
DeGraffenreid, victims of California
fires,
victims of Flight from Wichita,
our country, our world,
all who are are ill,
all who are lonely,
all who mourn.

Missions Team

In 2024, the Missions Team served 756 patrons and 1,560 family members. What a blessing it has been to receive so many donations of food, financial support, and patronage! We appreciate your continued support!

Giving



We believe that all people are a gift from God, so it is important that you decide how your gifts are used for the Church. There are three ways for you to give financially. Please review the options before submitting your offering. Go to baldwinfirst.org/give for more information or scan the QR code.

WEATHER ALERTS

It's wintertime in Baldwin! Should there be inclement weather, announcements will be posted on Facebook and the Baldwin First United Methodist Church website.

Ash
wednesday

Wednesday, March 5

Daylight Savings Time - March 9

Remember to set your clocks forward one hour!



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

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Church Office
785-594-6612
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Office Hours
Tuesday - Thursday
10 am - 2 pm

Website
baldwinfirst.org

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



Kenya Night

Story by David Burke, content specialist, at dburke@greatplainsumc.org.

Photo credits: Dr. Frank Perez

More than 100 people from Baldwin City and beyond got a literal and figurative taste of east Africa during the first Kenya Night at Baldwin First United Methodist Church on February 1.

"We are celebrating diversity," said Rev. Koech, the church's pastor since July. "We were celebrating Martin Luther King a few weeks ago and we thought this would be a good time to start celebrating diversity. "And let's start with the Kenyans, since I'm here," the African native added with a laugh.

The two-hour celebration began with a cafeteria-style meal served by members of Baldwin First. It included samosas, a triangular pastry filled with beef or vegetables; mandazi, fried sweet bread infused with coconut and cardamom; and other foods that were given a Midwest translation: "barbecue beef," "fried chicken" and "beef stew."



Participants in Kenya Night enjoyed an authentic meal prepared by a Kansas City caterer. The food was prepared by the only Kansas City-area caterer who could cook Kenyan food, Koech said. "The cuisine, he said, is "'kind of spicy'."

"We kind of borrowed it from India," Koech said of the cuisine. "If you've been to Indian restaurants, you might see some of this Kenyan food. Indians came to Kenya in the 1950s to build the railroad and ended up staying. They came with their culture, and they have influenced us."



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship	9:30 am
Sunday School	10:30 am
Adult Bible Studies	10:30 am
B.L.A.S.T. Youth Group	10:30 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

February 14
Valentine's Day

February 22
Food Pantry, 9-10:30 am

Leadership Council Meeting
7 pm

March 5
Ash Wednesday
Caregiving Meeting, 1 pm

March 9
Daylight Savings Time
Set your clocks forward 1 hour

April 18
Good Friday

April 20
Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service: 7 am
Sullivan's Square
BFUMC Service 9:30 am

May 25
Share Your History Night

The music started off with Galen Schmidtberger, a Russell singer, accordionist, and pianist that Koech knew from Koech's time as pastor at Russell Trinity UMC.

It segued into a choir of singers and dancers from Ushindi United Methodist Fellowship in Kansas City, Kansas, which includes many Kenya natives and one of three churches in the area with Kenyans worshipping.



Among those in the audience singing and dancing with the Ushindi group was Mel Gettler, a Baldwin City yoga instructor. A California native, Gettler lived in Kenya for a year with a friend during a gap year between high school and college. "It was cool to be here and hear the Swahili and see all the food," said Gettler. "It was nice to have a little reminder of a good year."



David Pendleton, a member of another of Koech's former churches, Lenexa UMC, told of that congregation's mission trip to Kenya, building a youth church, and improving a water filtration system.

Pendleton shared his experiences as a newcomer to the country, including being greeted by members of Koech's family and being served meals.

"They're big on hospitality over there," he said. "If you clean your plate, it means you want more." Pendleton's PowerPoint slides showed how the motorcycle is the main form of transportation, transporting six children to school, a couch, and an animal carcass by various drivers.



MISSION TEAM MEMBERS

Nancy Arnold
Susan Butell
John & Marilee Beins
Coleen Burgess
Kelley Bethell-Smith
Martha Harris

HOSPITALITY TEAM MEMBERS

Linda Ballinger
Coleen Burgess
Samantha Cheek
Sheryl Cleverley
Katherine Cook
Christi Darnell
Jill Dodge
Jennifer Fulton
Lori George
Carolyn Groves
Peggy McMillon
Marcia O'Neal
Jeanne Stanley
Kathleen Thomas
Janet Venable
Tara Welch
Letha Williamson



BALDWIN FIRST

Kenya Night, Koech said, was not only a way to expose the churches in the area to his culture, but for some members to come together as a whole. "In this crowd there are people who have been worshipping online and haven't been to church since COVID. This was our way of getting them out," he said. "People are disconnected with the church, and this is helping them come out.

"It was a little bit challenging," Koech added. He hoped the night, partially compensated by freewill offering, could become a tradition. "Maybe next time we'll be celebrating another country," he said.





Kenya Night was a great evening for fun, food, and fellowship! Many thanks to all of the performers, servers, those who donated food, set up, tore down, and decorated!

We are so appreciative that Dr. Frank Perez shared his gift of photography with us



Community Events



Vintage Park Baldwin City

1-3 pm

Join us for Vintage Park at Baldwin City Sweetheart Bingo! Prizes, silent auction, and more. Fun for the whole family! Tickets \$20 and include bingo sheets, dabbers, refreshments, lots of fun! Proceeds will go to our residents activity fund!

Lumberyard Arts Center gallery artist, Theresa Shetler, will be offering a demonstration on Welt Felting.

Everyone is invited. Saturday, February 15, 10-Noon

Welt felting most likely began in Central Asia in the first century CE. It was used in clothing and in the creation of yurts or tent-like structures that were warm and waterproof because of the qualities of wool. These items were often decorated and embellished. The structure of lambs wool allows for the fibers to create beautiful pieces for the home, art, or wearable. I will demonstrate how to create a wall piece using the wet felting technique along with how to embellish details with the technique of needle felting. Come and enjoy a fun and informative demonstration. There will be some opportunity to participate, touch and feel the processes that I use to create some of my artworks.



Valentine Paint and Sip Lovely Flower Company

5-7 pm

Unleash your inner artist!
All materials provided!



Lumberyard Arts Center



FEB
17

BALDWIN CITY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Tech Time

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Baldwin City Library (map)

We will show you how to block scammers on your phone and also show you how to use your notes/notepad on your cell phone.

Underground Railroad Hand-Quilting
with Angie & Ruthie No experience necessary!
All welcome
February 15, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Denim Jacket Sashiko with Sharon
February 13 & 14, 1:00 - 3:30 pm

**Macrame Wall Hanging with
Becky & Angie**
March 15, 12:30 - 3:30 pm

Registration Required



SAVE THE DATE

March 4
Night of 1,000 Stars
Baldwin City Library
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Be a BU Student for the Day!

College of Arts & Sciences - Baldwin City Campus

For all high school juniors & seniors! Experience a day-in-the-life of a Baker student by attending a Baker Core class, exploring student life, visiting academic programs, discovering campus, and enjoying lunch in the Cafeteria with current students.

**Register by
February 27!**

BU Theatre presents: The Vampire Cowboy Trilogy

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 12:00 AM –
Sunday, March 9, 2025, 12:00 AM

Rice Auditorium
404 Eighth Street, Baldwin City, KS, 66006, United States
(map)

Do you like Comic Books? Cowboys? Cheerleaders? Superheroes? Samurai fights? Zombies? How about Vampires? If any of that sounds like your thing, then our March show is right up your alley. From the same playwright that brought you *She Kills Monsters*, Baker Theatre is thrilled to present *The Vampire Cowboy Trilogy* by Qui Nguyen and Robert Ross Parker. (March 6-9, 2025- Rice Auditorium). This live comic book anthology contains three irreverent comedies that hilariously skewer well-beloved genres. Hard-boiled paranormal detective Jake Misco takes on the case of a mysterious stranger who is haunted by her dead husband; a Cold War-era crime-fighting duo struggles to save America from the throes of Communism while questioning their own principles; and a teenage warrior princess named Tina must fight evil Zombie cheerleaders and the tedium of French class. It promises to be a hilarious night of entertainment!



BALDWIN FIRST
P.O. Box 25
Baldwin City, KS 66006

SCAN ME



The Vine is a monthly newsletter centered around the events, discipleship, and ministries of Baldwin First United Methodist Church. Please use the QR code to choose whether you would like to receive the newsletter via mail, email, or if you want to be removed from the mailing list. You may also contact the church office at office@baldwinfirst.org.