



*"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 • October 2025



As I see it . . .

In a world that often prioritizes personal gain and individual success, volunteering in the church offers a powerful reminder of the beauty and blessing found in serving others. The local church isn't just a building or an institution—it's a living body of believers, each with unique gifts and a vital role to play. When we step up to serve, we become active participants in God's work in our community and beyond.

As we get closer to nominating committee members for 2026, I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to all those who signed up on September 7 during ministry Sunday to serve in various departments. When we volunteer in the church, several things happen to us such as the following:

- **Spiritual Growth:** Service challenges us, teaches us humility, and draws us closer to God as we rely on His strength.
- **Building Community:** It creates lasting bonds with others, forming friendships rooted in shared purpose and faith.
- **Making a Difference:** Whether you're greeting guests, teaching children, helping behind the scenes, or leading worship, every role contributes to the mission of the church.

Areas that are still available to serve God at Baldwin First:

- **Nursery and Children's Ministry:** Teaching, assisting, or caring for young ones during services (Talk to Jill Dodge).
- **Choir:** Singing, playing instruments (Talk to Kelly Bethell-Smith).
- **Worship Technology:** Working with audio/visual equipment (Talk to Ryan Berg & Frank Perez).
- **Worship Liturgist and/or Children's Time:** The liturgist reads the Call to Worship and Scriptures. The Children's Time participant will create a 5' or less sermon for the children (Talk to Kathleen Thomas).
- **Hospitality/Fellowship Team:** Greeting, ushering, or helping with events (Talk to Katherine Cook).
- **Missions:** Participating at food pantry, visiting the sick, or helping with local/global missions (Talk to Susan Butell or Nancy Arnold).
- **Prayer and Care Ministries:** Supporting others through prayer, counseling, or practical help in times of need (Talk to Pastor Ezekiel or Linda Ballinger).
- **Facilities and Maintenance:** Maintaining the outer yard, and keeping church building clean, safe, and welcoming (Talk to Mike Curran).

Each act of service, no matter how small, is valuable in the eyes of God.

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Barriers to Serving:

It's normal to feel hesitant. You may think:

"I'm too busy."

"I'm not qualified."

"Someone else can do it better."

But God doesn't call the equipped—He equips the called. If you have a willing heart, He will give you strength, wisdom, and opportunity. Start small. Talk to lay leader (Doug Cheek) about areas of need. You might be surprised how your gifts align perfectly with what's needed.

Volunteering in the church isn't about filling a slot—it's about fulfilling your purpose. Every member matters. Every act of service counts. And through it all, God is glorified.

So what about you? Where is God calling you to serve at Baldwin First?

Shalom!

Pastor Ezekiel Koech

BLAST

Our group name stands for **B**elieving, **L**oving, and **S**erving **T**ogether. We share a short Sunday School/Bible study lesson every Sunday along with some type of service project or other community activity. Our group ranges from older 5th graders who join us in the spring through high school seniors. Our upperclassmen serve as assistant BLAST Crew leaders. We are looking to add an additional enthusiastic leader to work with Angela Murray to support these awesome youth!

BLAST will not meet the following Sundays: 9/28, 10/5, 10/18, 11/23, 11/30, 12/21 & 12/28.

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School has officially begun! We welcome all children ages Preschool through Fifth grade. We meet every Sunday immediately following our church service and end at 11:30. We offer a snack to the class each week. Please reach out to Jill at jillmdodge@gmail.com or Cynthia Perez at cynthiaperez1975@gmail.com with any questions.

Each week we read a Bible story and do various activities to help students learn about that Bible story and how that story fits into their lives. We do arts and crafts projects, play games, act out the stories, and more. We would love to welcome your child, grandchild, or neighbor to Sunday School!

Jill, Cynthia, and Amy

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

October 18-19

Maple Leaf Weekend
No services October 19 at
Baldwin First or Ives Chapel

October 23

Widów/Widowers, 1:30. p.m.

October 31

Hometown Halloween, 6-7 p.m.

November 5

Caregivers, 1 p.m.

November 8

Turkey Dinner, 5-7 p.m.

November 9

Children's Sunday

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 would be willing to open your home to students.

Advent Choir

All are welcome to join the BFUMC Advent Choir! Rehearsals will be Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. on November 20, December 4, December 11, and December 18. For more information, see the flyer below.



Hometown Halloween

Halloween is just around the corner, and Baldwin First will be participating in Trunk or Treat. The Hospitality/Fellowship team would very much appreciate your donations of candy; there is a basket in the narthex to receive your generous contributions.

You are also welcome to join us on October 31 from 6-7 pm as we hand out goodies to Baldwin's youngest tricksters!



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 Pereze, Vocals
Donna Curran
Kathleen Thomas

MISSIONS TEAM MEMBERS

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



New Member's Spotlight:

John Blackmar

John began attending Baldwin first in January 2025. He became a member in May 2025. His daughter is Jeannette Blackmar.

John was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin. His family moved to Meadville, Pennsylvania where he graduated from high school.

After high school, John entered the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs. He was assigned to the Air Force Space Systems Division as a Management Engineer in California. While in California, he graduated from the University of Southern California with an MS in R&D Systems Management. After his graduation from USC, John lived in Washington, DC for several years. In 1972, he was assigned to Ohio and worked for the AX (A-10) Fighter Program Office. John also worked for the Eastman Kodak Government Systems in New York and the National Reconnaissance Office NRO in Chantilly, Virginia. He retired in 2018 in Saber Creek, Colorado.

After retirement, John moved to Baldwin.

John hopes to gain friendships and a Christian Purpose as a member of Baldwin First. He hopes to be involved with a men's group.

We are excited to have you as a member at Baldwin First!

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
ezekiel.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](#)





BALDWIN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Paving the way for a bright future. #BaldwinBuilt

Greetings!

On behalf of the Baldwin Education Foundation and Baker Serves, I wanted to get in touch to inquire about Baldwin First being the host site for our 2nd annual joint community service day event entitled, "Cats and Dogs 'Paws' to Serve!"

This would take place on Monday, January 19, 2026 from 9am-noon. I would be responsible for all set up and clean up. Examples of service projects we will do include an MLK themed food drive for our pantry (Meaty soups, Laundry detergent, and Kid-friendly snacks), letter writing to deployed troops, care packages for local first responders, hygiene kits for Bert Nash, and Valentines for senior residents living in our 4 Baldwin care facilities.

If there is any project that the church would benefit from, we would love to be able to do that as well!

I have included an informational flyer for your review. Last year we had about 85 people of all ages join together in service, and so we look forward to providing this opportunity again at BFUMC, with your approval.

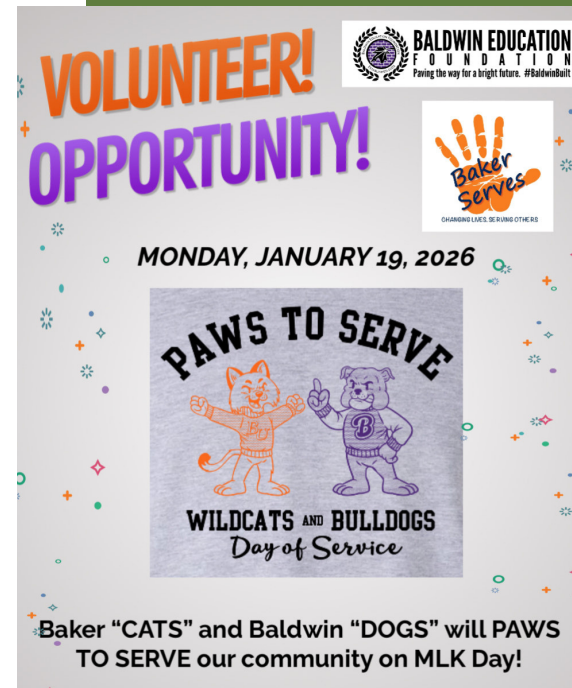
Kelley Bethell-Smith

New Music Ministry!

A new ministry has begun at Baldwin First - BFUMC Music Missions! Kelley Bethell-Smith is offering free vocal lessons to students!

Several hours of free instruction are offered each week. In return, students will be bringing items for the food pantry in lieu of monetary fees.

Thank you, Kelly, for sharing your talents to benefit our community!



Community Events

2025 Mayor and City Council
CANDIDATE FORUM

October 5
2:00 p.m.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
415 EISENHOWER STREET

 **BALDWIN CITY**
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

KAW VALLEY FARM TOUR ★

AT THE LUMBERYARD ARTS CENTER
October 4 (9-5) & October 5 (11-4)

EXPLORE HERITAGE TEXTILE ARTS!

 **View Seasonal Fall Quilt Display**

Demonstrations:

- Hand piecing & machine piecing of quilt blocks
- History & Quilting the Underground Railroad Quilt
- Crocheting
- Tatting



Textile Arts Activities for Kids

LOCALLY MADE Textiles for Sale

718 HIGH ST. BALDWIN CITY, KS

THE LUMBERYARD ARTS CENTER PRESENTS:

SAVE THE DATE!



FOR THE 4TH

Spoken Word

A LITERARY PERFORMANCE
FEATURING LOCAL TALENT

10.10.25
07:00 PM
718 High St. Baldwin City, KS

THE LUMBERYARD ARTS CENTER PRESENTS:

SPOKEN WORD

A Literary Performance

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF POWERFUL POETRY, DRAMATIC SHORT STORIES, AND EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCES AT OUR SPOKEN WORD EVENT! THIS FREE, DONATION-BASED GATHERING FEATURES LOCAL TALENT SHARING RAW AND MOVING PIECES.

10.10.25
7:00 PM, doors open 6:30 PM
718 High St. Baldwin City, KS

Featured Artists:

Emma Bailey	Shannon Musgrave
Catherine Gerstner	Vic Peterson
T.J. Harrison	Maddy Roger
Leslie Jessip	Phil Roger
Ashley Clayton Kay	Carlin Charles Thompson
Michelle Kirk	Sally Sudja
Kay Kuhlmann	Jim Wilson
John Musgrave	

\$10 suggested donation

MAY CONTAIN MATURE CONTENT

Victoria Love presents

Baldwin City Youth Ensemble

For beginning and intermediate string players, pianists, and percussionists

Tuesdays | 5:45 PM - 7:00 PM
Sep. 2 - Dec. 2 | \$180 enrollment
Baker University Band Room

I'm Victoria Love, a senior music education major at Baker University. I specialize in strings and keyboards, and I want to create an ensemble for the young string players of Baldwin City. Parents who play an instrument are welcome to join, too! We will have one performance during the second week of December.

CONTACT ME AT
LessonsWithVictoria@gmail.com