



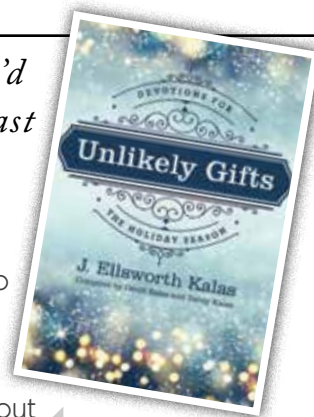
Unlikely Gifts

Have you ever received a gift that you never thought you'd receive? Chances are most of us can recall receiving at least one gift that we'd put on a wish list whilst crossing our fingers behind our backs.

I can remember receiving a gift like this once when I was a kid. I had wanted this really neat toy for so long. It had everything a toy needs to be cool: something to put together, a way to make it uniquely yours, and it plugged in! So, I put the toy on my Christmas list. Then I waited and waited until Christmas arrived. On Christmas morning, almost certain I wasn't going to receive it, but holding out hope nonetheless, I ran to the Christmas tree and unwrapped the gifts beneath. To my pleasant surprise, there it was - a Lite Brite! I cannot even begin to guess the number of hours I spent in front of that thing over the next several months! *The perfect gift!*

People of faith, as Christians, our perfect gift came in much the same fashion. Jesus, the one for whom God's people had held out hope for so long, came into our world wrapped in swaddling clothes. This little one, given specially for His people, would become the unlikely gift the world had ever known.

This December, I invite you to join me in reading J. Ellsworth Kalas' *Unlikely Gifts*. This book of daily Christmas-season devotions will soften your heart, bringing you joy and peace all month long. As a bonus, the words contained in its pages are easily accessible and quickly read. Copies of the devotional are now available for purchase at the Welcome Center.



May God's grace surround you this Advent as you ponder and celebrate the gift of our Savior!

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Justin

WESLEY CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE:

Monday, December 24th, 2018 (*Christmas Eve*)

5:00 p.m. Family Service "Journey to Bethlehem" (*Wesley Hall*)

7:00 p.m. Pre-Service Music (*Sanctuary*)

7:30 p.m. Candlelight Service/Holy Communion (*Sanctuary*)

10:30 p.m. Pre-Service Music (*Sanctuary*)

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service/Holy Communion (*Sanctuary*)

Winter Reads

As the days get shorter and the temperature drops, snuggle up in your favorite chair with a good book! *Unlikely Gifts* by J. Ellsworth Kalas is a timely and touching devotional for the season of Advent. Copies of the devotional are available for purchase on Sundays, November 18 and 25, for only \$10. Enjoy!



SURGE

News & Events

by Frank Newburn

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH YOUTH
6th-12th Grade Youth

Sr. High Chicago Shopping Trip (Saturday, December 1st):

All Sr. High students are encouraged to join us for our Chicago Shopping trip on Saturday, December 1st. We will drive to the Chicago suburbs and then take a train into the city for an afternoon of shopping and hanging out on Michigan Ave and eating delicious Chicago style food. Cost is \$5 CASH for your train ticket and \$25-30 total for lunch and dinner plus whatever money you want to spend on shopping. We will leave church at 8am and return by 11pm that night. Sign up at the welcome table and invite friends to join us!

Christmas Lock-In (Friday, December 7th):

On Friday, December 7th, we will be hosting our annual SURGE Christmas Lock-In from 7pm Friday night until 8am Saturday morning. We will enjoy fun games, activities, food, broomball, and more. Cost is \$5 at the door (meet at Wesley) plus a wrapped white elephant gift to exchange and a release form signed by your parent to play broomball later at the Pepsi Ice Center. We are also asking each person who comes to bring a package of baby wipes to go towards our church's distribution ministry in the new Wesley West building. Please have your 2018-2019 general permission form turned in to attend this event and be sure to grab one for a friend if they are joining you. Sign up and release forms are available at the welcome table and SURGE board.

Winterfest (Friday, January 19th thru Monday, January 21st):

All Sr. High students are encouraged to join us for our annual Sr. High winter retreat...Winterfest! We will travel to Silver Birch Ranch in Wisconsin for a weekend of fun winter activities, an amazing speaker, powerful worship, and tons of fun and fellowship. Cost is \$110 plus travel meals and scholarships are available if needed. We will leave at 4:45pm on Friday, January 18, and return by 9pm on Monday January 21. Information sheets are available at SURGE on Wednesday nights and on the SURGE board across from the Jr. High lounge. Registration and deposits are due by Wednesday, January 9th (if you want a Winterfest shirt) or Monday, January 13th (no shirt). Registration forms can be placed in Frank's mailbox or given to him directly. There is limited space so please respond ASAP to reserve your spot on the bus.



Christmas Break Schedule:

Just a reminder that SURGE will not meet on Wednesday, December 26th, or Wednesday, January 2nd, due to Christmas break. Surge will resume again on Wednesday, January 9, at its normal time. There will also be no Sunday school for any ages Sunday December 23rd or 30th due to Christmas break. Classes will resume on January 6th.



THANK YOU!

Through the generosity of our Wesley congregation, SURGE was able to collect over 3,500 food items for our food drive last month for the Center for Hope!

WESLEY'S *Bright* BEGINNINGS

www.wesleysbrightbeginnings.com

Panera Bread Fundraiser

Take the night off from cooking and join us for tasty sandwiches, soups and salads at Panera Bread Bakery for a good cause!

WHEN: Tuesday, December 4TH, 2018
from 4:00-8:00 pm

WHERE: 1401 South Veterans Parkway

WHY: To enjoy a delicious meal and support our Wesley's Bright Beginnings Preschool program!

Mention Wesley's Bright Beginnings when you place your order and they'll get a portion of your purchase donated back to us! Thank you for your support!

Welcome *to the World*



We are thrilled to announce that Wesley members Missy and Chris Dundov have welcomed a new baby to their family.

Connor Stefan Dundov was born on November 4th, 2018, and is welcomed home by older sisters Aubrey (age 6) and Isabelle (age 3). Congratulations to the entire Dundov family!

Scouting News & Events



Girls are Joining the Pack!

The Boy Scouts of America have announced plans to broadly accept girls, marking a historic shift for the century-old organization. This includes Wesley's own Troop 918! Young ladies (ages 11-17) who are not currently involved in scouting are welcome. Keep an eye out for additional details about this new opportunity

A Round of Applause...

Jadon Robinson, son of Jim and Kathy, has recently achieved the rank of Eagle Scout for his many years of involvement with the Boy Scouts of America, and service to his community. We congratulate this young man for his hard work and dedication. *Bravo, Jadon!*

Deck the (Wesley) Halls!

Save the Date for the Hanging of the Greens as we excitedly prepare for the upcoming holiday season. Join us for a fun evening of refreshments, cookies and holiday music, as we spruce up the sanctuary and add some holiday to the halls on **Wednesday, November 28 starting at 5:00 p.m.**



Loads of Love Ministry

Our first event for this new ministry was held on Thursday, November 15th at the Wash House on Clinton Street in Bloomington and we had LOADS of fun! This ministry helps those in our community who need assistance with laundry. If you would like to volunteer, please email Gary Thompson at garyt23@frontier.com or drop a few quarters in our collection station outside the sanctuary to help ease the "load".



Lead With Love

With the upcoming Special General Conference in February, there has been a lot of conversation around the topic of sexuality and the difficulty in navigating such a sensitive topic while maintaining a unified community. In light of this, Anchored will be discussing some topics that challenge our community and how we can approach these topics with a focus on open-mindedness and love towards our brothers and sisters who may not share our same views.

ANCHORED
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

DECEMBER 2018

www.wesley-umc.com

Kindergarten - 5th Grade

December Focus:

Our Preschoolers will be learning about The Christmas Story this month as they celebrate Jesus' Birthday Bash. Elementary kids will be concentrating on Compassion with the Christmas Story and Luke's Gospel.

A Big Thanks:

With your help, we raised over \$250 for the Baby Fold by creating sweet and sugary gingerbread houses, which were featured at The Festival of Trees from Nov 16th - 18th.

W.I.S.E. Calendar:

Nov 30: We are hosting an ADVENT FAMILY FUN NIGHT 6-8 pm in Wesley Hall

Dec 1: Wesley Children's Ministry is manning a float in the Annual Bloomington/Normal Jaycees Christmas Parade.

If your family would like to participate and walk alongside our float, contact Kathi at kpritts@wesley-umc.com.

Dec 9: We will host our small group Christmas parties during WISE!

Dec 16: It's time for JINGLE JAM! Join us for our annual Christmas party for all ages!

Dec 24: Journey to Bethlehem Family Christmas Experience Service at 5:00 p.m.

Dec 30: Wesley is hosting only one service at 10 am (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL)

Dec 31: Game Night/Watch Night (games, potluck & early midnight and service).

What is W.I.S.E.? (*Wesley Intergenerational Sunday Experience*)

W.I.S.E. is where families learn together, strengthen the bonds of family and faith, and have conversations of faith. W.I.S.E. begins each Sunday at 10:15 AM in Wesley Hall and then moves to rooms 21-30.

W.I.S.E. uses Orange curriculum which is Christian Virtue and Faith based with highly engaging video, games and active fun! The "Orange Philosophy" by the reThink Group encourages families and churches to work together to more powerfully impact the spiritual lives of children.

Adult Education:

SUNDAYS (*Beginning November 11th*):

- "Home for Christmas" from 10:15-11:00 a.m. in the lounge with Nancy Bollman.
- Journey through the Bible will resume from 10:15-11:00 am in the conference room (*this group is currently finishing ACTS*).

WEDNESDAYS:

- The small group in the lounge will be starting "A Not So Silent Night".



A Sweet and Savory Christmas



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
The United Methodist Church

Grab a friend and join us for an evening of fun and fellowship with United Methodist Women! Delicious ideas for entertaining and gift giving hosted by Traci Trunk, owner, The Olive Bin in Normal, Illinois.

The Olive Bin Holiday Prep Party

Date: Tuesday, Dec 11

Time: 6:00 PM

Place: Wesley UMC Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendar now for our holiday dinner and program! Friends welcome. Tickets will be available Sundays on 11/25, 12/2, and 12/9 between services in the Garden Room. The cost is \$5 per person for a wonderful evening and meal.

Child care will be available, please notify us when you purchase your ticket.



THE OLIVE BIN

GEMS Growing Each Mom Spiritually

GEMS will meet November 26th at the home of Sara Newburn. We will discuss strategies for talking with our kids about money. Contact Liz Tomera for more information or if you have questions by emailing tomeras@comcast.net. *All mothers of young children are invited to join our GEMS Circle!*

Box Tops

UMW is collecting General Mills Box Tops and Pop Can Tabs to support Cunningham Children's Home, in Urbana, IL and Red Bird Mission School in Beverly, KY. Please place them in a labeled box in the stairwell at the East Door. *Thank you for your mission contribution for children!*

Faith Circle

A friendly reminder that Faith Circle, our energetic seniors with very active, long retired ladies, will not meet in November or December. We will resume our normal schedule in January. *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

A Ringing Christmas

Bells in Motion of Central Illinois *presents* A Ringing Christmas!
Tickets are available at the door (adults \$15, kids 12 and under \$5)

Saturday, December 1, 2018

Showtime 7:00 p.m.

First Congregational United Church of Christ
2100 S Bates Ave
Springfield, Illinois

Sunday, December 2, 2018

Showtime 4:00 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church
1617 E Emerson Street
Bloomington, Illinois



DECEMBER 2018

www.wesley-umc.com

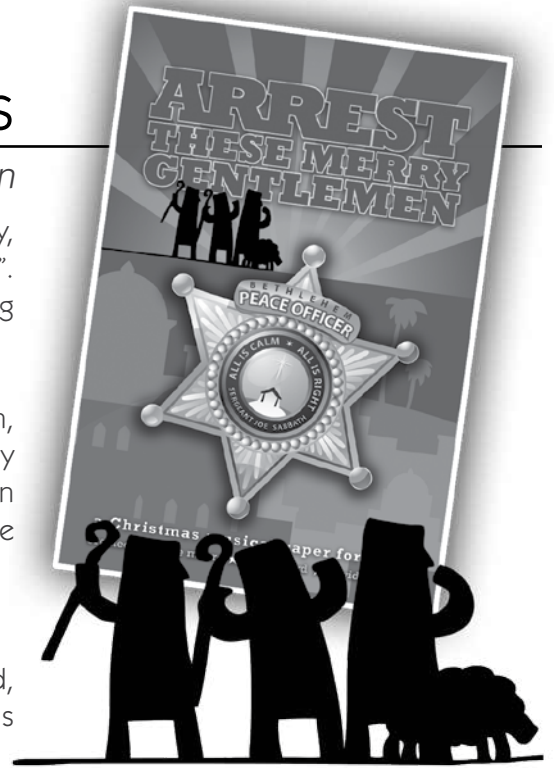
Choir Calendar:

Wesley Singers' (2nd through 5th grade) Christmas Musical will be held on Sunday, December 2nd, at the 11:15 Service featuring "Arrest These Merry Gentlemen". Come show your support for our young performers, as they have been working hard since October to bring this story to life!

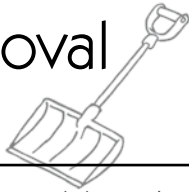
Mark your calendars for our Choir Christmas Café on Saturday, December 15th, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in Wesley Hall. This festive event is hosted by the Wesley youth choir to help fund a mini choir tour to the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota. Enjoy desserts, coffee and hot chocolate while listening to the sounds of the season! *Donations are appreciated.*

Who are the Wesley Singers?

Wesley Singers is a children's choir at Wesley made up of very talented second, third, fourth, and fifth-graders. This wonderful choir will begin rehearsals throughout November to put on a show that you won't soon forget.



Snow Removal Ministry



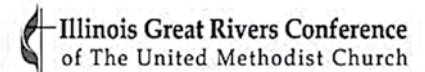
If you are looking for a ministry that directly benefits the members of Wesley, consider helping with the Snow Removal Ministry! This hard working group of volunteers ensures the safety of our church staff and congregation, by leading the snow removal effort and keeping our sidewalks and parking lots safe. If you can help, please contact Dave Koth, via email at davekoth@comcast.net or by calling 309.663.6770 for more details.

Snow Days



In the event of inclement weather, Wesley follows the guidelines of School District 87 for closings, cancellations and delays. Please visit our facebook page [@wesleyumcbloomington](https://www.facebook.com/wesleyumcbloomington) or check the WJBC cancellations page at www.wjbc.com/wjbc-cancellations/

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



IGRC scholarship application process to open Dec. 1. The Illinois Great Rivers Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is offering a scholarship opportunity for undergraduate students during 2019-2020 school year. Applications will be accepted starting Dec. 1.

Applicants must be members of a United Methodist Church in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference for a minimum of one year. Scholarships awarded will be sent to the community college, college or university that the student will be attending during the 2019-2020 school year to help pay for their undergraduate tuition. The scholarships awarded will be a minimum of \$500.

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 pm on March 1, 2019. If you have any questions, contact Christy Blickensderfer (cblickensderfer@igrc.org) or Amy Shreve (ashreve@igrc.org).



Courageous + Contagious:

There are some courageous people in our congregation! Of the 245 commitment cards we have received totaling \$985,292 in commitments for 2019, 105 of you have elected to increase your giving. And that generosity is contagious, as demonstrated by the 20 cards received from people who did not make a commitment last year!

While we now have enough support to cover 83% of next year's planned expenses, we still need roughly \$200,000 to fully fund our plans for 2019. If you have not yet turned in your commitment, please do so this Sunday by placing your card in the offering plate. You can also drop off or mail the card to the church office, fill out the form on our website, or call Myrna Simpson at the church at 827-8046. Every commitment, no matter the amount, is needed! *Thank you!*

Financial Update:

General fund receipts as of 10/31/18	\$1,048,862
General fund expenses as of 10/31/18	\$1,066,348
<i>Deficit</i>	\$17,486



Missions Advent Offering

Make an impact in the lives of people in our community, our state, and our country by giving to the Missions Advent Offering. The goal of the Advent Offering this year is \$12,400. This offering will support the work of the following local social service organizations, Illinois Great Rivers Conference Golden Cross ministries, and domestic missions:

Park Methodist Food Pantry
 Wesley Paper Goods Distribution
 Labyrinth House
 Faith in Action
 Home Sweet Home Mission
 Western Avenue Community Center
 Community Health Care Clinic
 Habitat for Humanity
 Salvation Army/Safe Harbor
 The Baby Fold
 Red Bird Mission

Evenglow Lodge
 Sunset Home
 United Methodist Village
 Wesley Village
 Alton Memorial Hospital
 Methodist Medical Center of IL
 Chaddock
 Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House
 Spero Family Services
 Henderson Settlement Mission

Give as you can. Every donation is appreciated. Check out our website for more detailed information about these organizations by visiting <https://www.wesley-umc.com/category/news/>

CALENDAR

A Look Ahead

NOVEMBER

- Thanksgiving Schedule:
- 21 Office closes at noon
 - 22 Church Closed
 - 23 Church Closed
 - 28 Hanging of the Greens at 5:00 pm (Sanctuary)
 - 30 Advent Family Fun Night at 6:00 pm (Wesley Hall)

DECEMBER

- 1 Bloomington/Normal Jaycees Christmas Parade step-off at 10:00 am
- 1 A Ringing Christmas Concert 7:00 pm (Springfield)
- 1 SURGE Senior High Chicago Shopping Trip at 8:00 am
- 2 UMW Mittens Sale (between services in the Garden Rm)
- 2 Wesley Singers Christmas Musical at 11:15 am Service (Sanctuary)
- 2 A Ringing Christmas Concert 4:00 pm (Bloomington)
- 4 WBB Fundraiser 4:00 pm (Panera Bread South)
- 7 SURGE Lock-In at 7:00 pm (Wesley Hall)
- 9 W.I.S.E. Small Group Parties
- 11 A Sweet & Savory Christmas 6:00 pm (Wesley Hall)
- 15 Christmas Café Choir Fundraiser (Wesley Hall) at 7:00 pm
- 16 W.I.S.E. Jingle Jam
- 24 Christmas Eve Services:
 - 5:00 pm - Family Service
 - 7:00 pm - Pre-Music
 - 7:30 pm - Candlelight Service
 - 10:30 pm - Pre-Music
 - 11:00 pm - Candlelight Service
- 30 Only Service at 10:00 am

Wesley United Methodist Church 502 East Front Street | Bloomington, IL 61701

phone: 309.827.8046
 fax: 309.828.9625
 website: www.wesley-umc.com

After Hours Emergency Contacts:
 Reverend Sara L. Isbell 217.299.4870
 Reverend Justin Iverson 701.809.1203



WESLEY

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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309-827-8046
www.wesley-umc.com
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THANKFUL *Hearts*

“Do not be anxious about *anything*,
but in *everything* by prayer and supplication
with *thanksgiving* let your requests be
made known to God. And the *peace* of God,
which *surpasses* all understanding, will guard
your *hearts* and your *minds* in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7