



## Monthly Newsletter

### December 2025

Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Check us out on our web site [www.monticelloumc.com](http://www.monticelloumc.com)

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### *From Pastor Anne:*

At this time of year, when the sun rises late and sets early, many people fall into a bit of a funk due to the lack of light in our lives. For some people the funk is severe, and is called "Seasonal Affective Disorder." We are often told by our doctors to spend at least twenty minutes per day sitting under very bright lights in order to treat the disorder. You would be amazed how much this simple exposure to light can improve the lives of suffering people. Other folks don't get depressed every winter, but they're feeling down this winter because of some aspect of their lives: the loss of a job, or of a dream, or of a loved one. Some people (maybe you!) are feeling down and they don't even know why.

And that's just how life is. Sometimes we are feeling down while the rest of the world moves on around us. But during the Christmas season it is particularly hard to take. The whole world, it seems, is decking the halls and making with the merry, and fa la la la, and we try to smile and play along but deep down inside we are weeping. If that sounds familiar, The Blue Christmas service is for you.

On Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> (the longest night of the year,) we will gather together with our friends from Cisco United Methodist Church for a joint Blue Christmas Service. We will acknowledge our sadness, our grief, and the hardship that the holidays can bring, we will lift them up to God, and we will hold each other close in prayer. If you are feeling down this year for whatever reason, or for no reason at all, please join us at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### *Our Sympathy...*

...to Mary Ellen Dean and her family on the passing of her husband Dick, Saturday November 22nd. A graveside service was held Monday, December 1st. Memorials may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

## *Cookie Walk*

The annual Cookie Walk will be held here at the church Saturday, December 13th from 8:30 to 11 am. Two sizes of boxes will be available to fill with goodies; one for \$15 and one for \$25. This year our proceeds will go to the Piatt County Ecumenical Food Pantry.

## *Outreach News*

There is only one miracle that is recorded in all four of the Gospels, and that is the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes. Well - that miracle was re-enacted right here in Piatt County last month. It all started with the gentlemen of the Knights Of Columbus (a fraternal organization for Roman Catholic men.) They decided to make a donation of \$500 to the Piatt County Ecumenical Food Pantry, hosted at our church. The director of the Food Pantry, Jean Holmes, asked the store manager at County Market, Anna Shipley, how we could best turn this generous donation into food for hungry people. Anna then consulted with the manager of the meat department, and later called Jean to let her know that they would happily turn money into hamburger for us.

Friends - when Jim Holmes went to get the hamburger, they nearly filled up his truck. In the same way that Jesus made five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food to feed 5,000 people, the County Market managers turned the already-generous donation from the Knights of Columbus into 600 pounds of hamburger for distribution at the Food Pantry.

## *It's Bell-ringing Time!*

It's that time of year again! **Will you help Piatt County Salvation Army reach their goal of raising \$13,000 in 4 Saturday's?** This is their only fundraiser for the entire year!! Gather your co-workers, family, or team together and donate 1 hour of your time to raise funds for Piatt County residents!! According to the Salvation Army, a volunteer ringing the bell by the red kettle raises more money than if the kettle were just sitting there quietly by itself. Red Kettle funds raise money for residents in Piatt County who need a little extra assistance with utilities, rent, food, and emergency shelter. Did you know that **90%** of all of the money raised stays right here in Piatt County to help with needs in our community?

Click on the Sign Up Genius button below for the Salvation Army Bell Ringing beginning Saturday, November 29th!

[CLICK ON THIS BUTTON FOR ACCESS TO ALL THE SIGN UP DAYS TO RING THE BELL!](#)

## 🎵 *Music Ministry News* 🎵

December is upon us and that means the annual Sounds of Christmas concert will be held at the church on Sunday, December 14, at 3:00 PM. This holiday tradition is a wonderful way to celebrate the Advent and Christmas season with beautiful bell music, organ fanfares, choral music, and this year's cantata "Tidings of Joy-A Celtic Christmas Celebration". You won't want to miss this beautiful event. We look forward to celebrating the sounds of the season with you. All donations from the meal will go to support the ministries of Chaddock Children's Home. Located in Quincy, IL, Chaddock is an internationally recognized leader in the treatment of children suffering from the psychological, emotional, and spiritual effects of significant abuse, neglect and trauma.

## *Youth Ministry News*

It is hard to believe that it is almost time to say goodbye to 2025. We have had a great year in Youth Group and it will only continue to get better come this spring and summer of 2026.

So much has happened this year and the youth leadership team cannot thank our church enough for the amount of support that they give the youth. So as this year wraps up, once again, thank you. Thank you for your support whether that is through prayer, financial support for the youth group, and making meals for the kids.

I cannot wait to see how 2026 looks for our church and our youth group!

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! - Will Pontious*

## *Family Ministry News*



Join us on December 21st at the 8:30 service for the kids' Christmas pageant, "A Not-So-Silent-Night". They will also be singing at the Sounds of Christmas Concert at 3pm.

There will be no Sunday school after the program on the 21st. Sunday school will resume January 11th. Happy Holidays!

## *Fun & Fellowship News*

As we wind down our 2025 events, we just want to say thank you to all who took part in fellowship with our church family throughout the year. We are lucky enough to have such a wonderful congregation that makes our fellowship within our church pretty special. In 2025 we were also able to expand that fellowship into our community as well! We have started planning 2026 and will have our Chili Cook Off/Bingo event on Sunday January 18th! So save the date! It's always a fun afternoon!

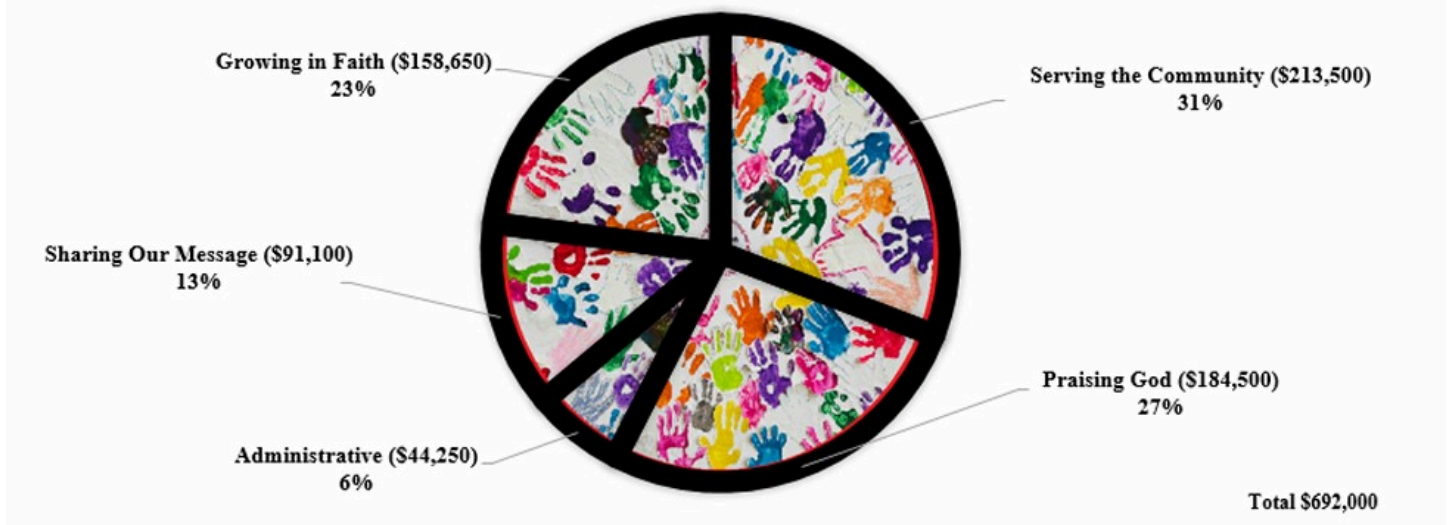
## *Stewardship News*

In wrapping up the 2026 Stewardship campaign, we want to thank all of those who took time to share their thoughts and feelings whether it was through a Sunday morning message or in our videos. You are all a part of loving boldly, serving joyfully and leading courageously and that's what makes us so special. If you haven't already done so please please take time to fill out your physical card or the electronic card for any 2026 estimated contributions. No amount is too small or big. We are looking forward to a wonderful 2026 with you all!

Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, and Lead Courageously!

### MUMC 2026 BUDGET:

Love boldly. Serve Joyfully. Lead courageously.



### **Typical Weekly events:**

Worship Services, Sunday at 8:30 and at 10:45, with Sunday School in between at 9:45.  
T.O.P.S., Monday, 4 pm  
Food Pantry, Tu & Th 12:45-3 pm, Wednesday, 5:30-7 pm  
Boy Scouts, Monday, 7 pm (if school is in session)  
Mat Weaving for Midwest Missions - Every third Monday of the month at 9 am  
“Just Walking” - Tu & Th, 8:30 am - Half hour devotional followed by indoor walking  
Bible Study Wednesdays, 1:15 pm  
W.A.T.Ch. Meals - Wed, 5 pm (September through mid-May)  
Sanctuary Choir rehearsals, Wed, 6 pm; Bell Choir & New Day rehearsals - Wed, 7pm\*  
Youth Group, Sunday, 5-7:15 pm; mid August through mid-May  
Summer Singers - Thursdays at 6:30 pm, June through mid-August  
\*(Sanctuary Choir and New Day take rehearsal hiatus June through August)

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#### **December 4th - 9th**

Pastor Anne out of town

#### **Sunday, December 7**

Millikin University Vespers Concert, 2 pm  
Contact Kelly Crawford - 217-827-1567

#### **Monday, December 8**

Outreach Comm. Mtg, 9 am  
P.E.O. Christmas, 6:15 pm

#### **Tuesday, December 9**

Piatt County Housing Coalition lunch- noon

#### **Friday, December 12**

Outreach bag assembly - 9 am  
Bring your cookies, candies for walk

#### **Saturday, December 13**

Cookie Walk, 8:30 - 11 am  
Tri-M Christmas lunch - noon

#### **Sunday, December 14**

Sounds of Christmas Concert, 3 pm  
Soup & Sandwiches to follow

#### **December 21**

Kids' Christmas Program at 8:30 service  
Poinsettia orders due  
Blue Christmas Service - 3 pm  
Youth Group Appetizer Party - 5 pm

#### **Thursday, December 24**

Christmas Eve Services; 5:00 & 7:00 pm