FIRST METHODIST
CHURCH OF ALBANY
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www.firstmethodistalbany.com
November 2026 · Volume LIV, No.11
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First WORD

"...The Word Became Flesh..." John 1:14 November 2026

Advent & Christmas 2026 at First Methodist Church

The God Who Came Near



Christmas is a wonderful time in the life of the church! We gather to celebrate the good news that God has come near to us in Jesus Christ. The Savior, born in Bethlehem, is God with us, and his coming is a reason for great joy!

I hope you'll join us this Advent and Christmas as we prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth.

Throughout the season, we'll have special opportunities for worship, music, fellowship, and service. We'll also explore the wonder of Christ's coming through our Advent sermon series, "The God Who Came Near."

Christmas gives us a wonderful opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with our neighbors, friends, and families. From the heart of downtown Albany, we want to offer Christ to our community and welcome people into the life of his church.

There is much to celebrate this season! I hope you'll make plans to participate, and I especially encourage you to invite someone to come along. Whether you've been part of First Methodist for years or are visiting for the first time, we'd love to celebrate Christmas with you.

Special Events & Services

Sunday, November 29
First Sunday of Advent
We begin the Advent season and our sermon series, "The God Who Came Near."

Sunday, November 29
Wonder of Christmas:
A Family Advent Celebration
Following the 10:30 AM worship service | Ford Hall
Bring the family for lunch and a special journey through the Christmas story with interactive activities and hands-on experiences. Register at https://tinyurl.com/wonderofchristmas.

Wednesday, December 2
Family Mission Night
6:00 PM — An evening of family mission and service.

Sunday, December 13
Christmas Musical
Emmanuel—God with Us, presented by our choir.
8:30 AM and 10:30 AM | Sanctuary.

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Communion Services
4:00 PM and 6:00 PM | Sanctuary

Sunday, December 27
Combined Cozy Christmas Service
10:00 AM | Sanctuary. One worship service; no Sunday School.

Also in this issue: All Saints Observance, information about Stewardship Sunday and making your 2027 pledge, and details about ordering Christmas poinsettias. **See inside!**

Our Church Staff

Jim Morrow	Senior Minister
Laurel Griffith	Associate Minister of Discipleship
Sylvia Broadaway	Hospitality Coordinator
Lisa Christenson	Administrative Assistant, Finance/Business Office
Jessica Clawson	Administrative Assistant
Amy Cloud	Administrative Assistant—Pastoral & Membership Support
Ashlee Crawford	Director of Preschool
Jeanne Geisel	Church Administrator
Aaron Goudy	Custodian
Becky Herndon	Administrative Assistant
Zerike Jones	Custodian
Brandon Keaton	Director of Music & Student Ministries
Emma Keaton	Ministry Assistant
Angela Oliver	Director of Food Services
Kallie Rutledge	Digital Media & Technology Specialist
Allison Vandenbergh	Director of Children's Ministries
Scott Wood	Facilities Manager
Kelvin Works	Maintenance Supervisor
Jackie Yielding	Director of Missions and Outreach

First Methodist Church of Albany

Stewardship Sunday

November 8



God is at work through First Methodist Church! Through worship, discipleship, friendship, and service, we have the joy of sharing Christ's love with our neighbors.

As we prepare for 2027, we invite you to prayerfully consider your pledge of tithes and offerings in support of our shared ministry.

On Sunday, November 8, we'll bring our commitment cards together during worship and pray over them as a church family.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

To make your pledge online, scan the code above or visit:

www.firstmethodistalbany.com/commitment

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

November Prayer

O Lord, our Lord how majestic is your name above the earth. Your glory surrounds us every-day and your mercies are new every morning. When we think of all you've ordered and created we are humbled to realize that you sing over us, you consider us your children. Thank you Father. As we enter into a new month help us to remember to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and to grieve with those who grieve. Lord, give us grace to support one another. Give us eyes to see new ways of honoring you and open our imaginations to discover your leading in our lives.

Father, help us to live each day to the full being true to you in every way. Jesus, help us to give ourselves away to others being kind to every one we meet. Spirit, help us to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all we do and say.

Amen.

Suzanne Unger

Congregational Care

Congratulations on the Birth of

- Brooks Spencer Cromie, son of Blake and Taylor Cromie. Grandson of Randy and Debbie Bishoff.
- Davis Olan Fay, son of Clifton and Laura Fay.

Christian Sympathy Is Extended to

- Ellen Harris in the death of her brother, Pete Gilbert
- Jean Hagelstein in the death of her niece, Diane Hardee
- Carlos Phillips in the death of his brother, Jimmy Phillips

Prayer Requests

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:15

- Bruce and Brenda Richards
- Church Family
- Don Ogle
- Elizabeth Champion
- Gayle Hicks
- Jim Morrow
- Kim and Louise Delgado
- Laurel Griffith
- Nan Crews
- Wes Westbrook
- Ronnie Brett
- Sandy Land
- Suzanne Land

Prayer requests may be given to the church by using the Prayer Request Card in our worship areas or by calling the church office (229-432-7407). Please re-submit your prayer request by the 15th of each month if continued prayer is needed.

Prayer Chain - Our prayer chain passes along urgent prayer needs. To activate the Prayer Chain after hours, contact: Molly Strickland, **229-343-3011**.

Minister on Call (after hours & weekends) - To reach the Minister on Call after hours and on weekends, call **229-733-1075.**

MEMORIALS: October 2026

Given to **Memorial Maintenance Trust Fund**
in memory of Jim Bowles by
*Joyce Pettit

Given to **Miracle Meals**
in memory of Jim Bowles by
*Charlie & Ann Plunkett
in memory of Peggy Tucker by
*Joyce Pettit
*Larry & Jackie Warnock
*Austin & Allison Turner
*Hank & Staci Wright
*Judy Randle & Steve Lee
*June Paschal
*Billie Mitchell
*Ted Kennedy, Kim Patrick, & David Kennedy
*David & Fran Clayton, III
in memory of Jimmy Phillips by
*Patsy Watson

Given to **Youth Ministry**
in memory of Becky M. Johnson by
*Tom & Tricia Marshall

Given to **Children's Ministry**
in memory of Ken Jones by
*Willette & Sam Strickland

MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP REPORT

AS OF AUGUST 2026

If you have any questions or would like to speak to someone regarding a donation, please call Lisa Christenson at 229-432-7407.

YTD Income:	$ 1,261,617.14
Prior Year:	$ 1,261,322.76
YTD Budget:	$ 1,423,368.00
YTD Expenses:	$ 1,419,163.82
Prior Year:	$ 1,306,630.70
YTD Budget:	$ 1,422,814.86





advent ornament sale

GET READY FOR OUR UPCOMING YOUTH ADVENT ORNAMENT SALE! OUR STUDENTS WILL BE SELLING ORNAMENTS OF THE WALDEN CHAPEL "GOOD SHEPHERD" STAINED GLASS WINDOW, BEGINNING NOV. 29 THROUGH DEC. 20. ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS OUR 2027 HOSANNA MISSIONS TOUR.

$30 per ornament

All Saints Sunday

November 1, 2026

On Sunday, November 1, we observe All Saints Sunday. We direct our attention to the rich inheritance of the Gospel that is given to all who have believed and all who believe in Jesus Christ.
We pay special attention to the fulfillment of Christ's promise to those among our church family who have outrun us to the Father's house since last November.
We remember and give thanks for their faithful lives—not only the earthly lives they lived, but the lives they live eternally today.
May God's peace be with the families and friends of our honored dead.

Deborah Murdock Green (Debbie) 3/12/1951–11/4/2025	**Joy Martin Harrison** 8/18/1941–12/8/2025	**Alvin Pettit** 9/10/1944–1/31/2026	**Elizabeth Pelle Wuller (Nan)** 1/25/1948–5/25/2026
Austin Taylor Wynn 7/1/1998–11/18/2025	**Phillip Johnston Gresham, Jr. (Phil)** 9/1/1937–12/26/2025	**Myrtice Laverne McKinnon** 1/30/1936–2/13/2026	**James Larry Bowles (Jim)** 8/14/1939–7/12/2026
William T. Clark (Bill) 1/11/1940–11/19/2025	**Ester Darlene Wilbanks Muse** 1/15/1930–12/26/2025	**Marian Whaley Arnold** 1/1/1935–3/30/2026	**William L. Griffin (Bill)** 7/18/1939–7/12/2026
Judy Hicks Varnell 3/10/1943–11/21/2025	**Leslie Batey Pritchett** 8/6/1942–12/29/2025	**Jean Spillers Garabedian** 9/9/1936–4/17/2026	**Jack William Ivey** 3/22/1956–8/7/2026
Evonne Smith Mull 9/15/1946–11/24/2025	**Evelyn Rogers** 4/17/1928–1/14/2026	**Mark Phillip Moshell** 10/19/1968–5/6/2026	**Margaret Delores Tucker (Peggy)** 9/14/1950–9/12/2026

FIRST METHODIST
MISSIONS

VETERANS, WE HONOR YOU!



Veterans, please join us for breakfast in your honor and worship service recognition.

Sunday, November 8, 2026
9:30 AM Breakfast in Ford Hall
8:30 AM and 10:30 AM Worship Service Recognition

Thank you for your service!

FAMILY MISSION NIGHT

Mark your calendar for **Wednesday, December 2, 2026,** at 6:00 PM in Ford Hall as we work together on a fun mission project, with festive refreshments and music from our children's choirs.

THANK YOU FROM ALBANY RESCUE MISSION

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF ALBANY!

The Albany Rescue Mission would like to extend a very special thank-you to the Sunday School classes at First Methodist Church of Albany for your generosity and support!

Your kindness is a beautiful reminder of what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Because of people and churches like you, we can continue to serve individuals and families in our community by providing meals, shelter, and hope to those who need it most.

We are incredibly grateful for Sunday School classes that go beyond the classroom to make a real difference in the lives of others. Your support is a blessing to our mission and to the people we serve every day.

From all of us at the Albany Rescue Mission, THANK YOU for partnering with us to share the love of Christ with our community! May God bless each of you for your faithfulness and generosity. 🙏🤍

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." — Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)

Jackie Yielding
Director of Missions and Outreach
jyielding@firstmethodistalbany.com

NOVEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING:

November 1: Bike Ministry
November 8: Military Support & Outreach
November 15: Altar Fund
November 22: Salvation Army
November 29: The Lord's Pantry

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

NEEDLEPOINT!

Learn to needlepoint or bring your own stitching or knitting project on Sunday, Nov. 8, from 4–6 PM in the Sapp Conference Room.

Beginner kits are $20.

Sign up required.

Hosted by the Women's Ministry Team.



— LADIES' BIBLE STUDY —

Majoring *on* Minors

Tuesdays at 10:30 AM

Join us for an eight-week journey through the Minor Prophets and their powerful messages to ancient Israel.

Though called "minor" for their length, these twelve books reveal an all-powerful God who longs to connect intimately with His people.

Together, we'll explore the prophets' personal stories, their messages, and how those same words still speak to our world today.



Teacher: Laurel Griffith | Location: Sapp Conference Room

MIDWEEK Menu

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 4	• Smoked Chicken • Potato Salad • Green Beans
NOVEMBER 11	• Spaghetti with Meatballs • California Blend Vegetables • Rolls
NOVEMBER 18	• Turkey & Ham • Dressing • Yam Patties • Squash Casserole • Rolls

Grab n' Go KIDS' OPTIONS!

Christmas POINSETTIAS

Honor or remember a loved one this Christmas.

To order, fill out an envelope located in the sanctuary and chapel pew racks or in the church office. Poinsettias will be in the sanctuary and Walden Chapel on Sunday, December 20.

$30.00 each

Out-of-town persons may mail orders to the church office.

ORDER DEADLINE
Sunday, December 6

MIDWEEK STUDIES

WEDNESDAYS AT 6 PM



MAJORING ON MINORS

Join us for an eight-week journey back to ancient Israel as we explore the words of the Minor Prophets who spoke for God in a dark and rebellious world.

Teacher: Laurel Griffith
Location: Walden Chapel



EXPERIENCING GOD

Knowing and Doing the Will of God

Have you ever wondered if God is truly at work in your life—and whether you're positioned to recognize it? This class will walk you through Henry Blackaby's transformative study, *Experiencing God,* helping you discover how to hear God's voice, understand His will, and join Him in the work He is already doing around you.

Teacher: Jackie Yielding
Location: WT Henry Classroom
Workbook required: $22.00

SPARK

What if creativity wasn't a luxury for the few—but the sacred calling of every believer?

Al Gordan writes, "Spark is a love letter to your creative self, a call to dream again, to reignite your imagination, and fan the flame of your potential. In the age of algorithms, your creativity just might save the world."

MIDWEEK STUDIES CLASS

EIGHT-WEEK INTERACTIVE CLASS

Join Suzanne and Gary Unger for this eight-week interactive class where you will discover:

- The four key stages of creative breakthrough: Imagination, Inspiration, Innovation, and Impact
- How faith and creativity are inseparable—and why the Church should be the most creative place on earth.
- How to silence fear, overcome resistance, and take risks with bold faith.
- Why failure is not your enemy but your greatest creative teacher
- How to unlock Spirit-filled innovation and step into your divine calling.

Teachers: Suzanne and Gary Unger
Location: Sapp Conference Room
Date & Time: Wednesdays at 6:00 PM
Resource: "Spark" by Al Gordan — $12.00



WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

SCAN THE QR CODE :

A Family Advent Celebration Join us on Sunday, November 29, following our 10:30 AM worship service in Ford Hall for a special family Advent celebration. Enjoy lunch together and journey through the Christmas story with interactive activities, hands-on experiences, and opportunities to discover the wonder of Jesus' birth. Bring the whole family as we make room in our hearts and homes for Jesus this Christmas season. We can't wait to celebrate with you! Register your family: https://tinyurl.com/wonderofchristmas

SEAWORLD SLEEPOVER

An overnight adventure for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders inside the SeaWorld, Orlando theme park has been booked for January 29-30. Save the date and be on the lookout for registration to open later this month.

Allison Vandenbergh, Director of Children's Ministries
avandenbergh@firstmethodistalbany.com

Our Preschool has been filled with fun, fellowship, and so many sweet memories! We recently enjoyed our annual Trunk or Treat in the gym, where our little ones had a wonderful time visiting tables, collecting treats, and enjoying all the excitement of the season. We also celebrated Donuts with Grownups, a special morning filled with sweet treats, big smiles, and precious moments shared with the special people in our children's lives.

Now, we are looking forward to gathering our entire Preschool family together for our Thanksgiving Feast! This will be a special time for our little ones and teachers to come together, share a meal, and celebrate the many blessings God has given us. As we enter this season of thankfulness, our hearts are overflowing with gratitude and joy for our precious children, supportive families, dedicated teachers, and wonderful church family. We are so blessed to be a part of a church that allows us to love, teach, and nurture these little hearts each day while sharing the love of Jesus. From the smallest hands to the biggest smiles, we have so much to be thankful for at First Methodist Preschool!

Blessings,
Ashlee Crawford
Preschool Director

THRIVE YOUTH

Check out our social media and register for trips at **bit.ly/m/thrivestudents**!

Connect with us on **Sundays from 4:00-6:00PM** in the Youth Center. Join us for devotions, small groups, snack supper, and a group activity. More info below!

Happy Fall from Thrive Student Ministry! Our first Hosanna Mission Tour fundraisers are this month; we are introducing a new Fall Booster Sunday on Sunday, November 15th. We will also be selling ornaments of the Walden Chapel "Good Shepherd" window during Advent, beginning Sunday, November 29th. We thank you for all your support of our Youth Missions!

UPCOMING THIS NOVEMBER:

NOVEMBER 1 – SMALL GROUPS (4-5:30PM) – *BRANDON & EMMA ON VACATION*
NOVEMBER 8 – SMALL GROUPS (4-5:30PM) – *BRANDON & EMMA ON VACATION*
NOVEMBER 15 – *FALL BOOSTER SUNDAY IN AM* – FRIENDSGIVING
NOVEMBER 22 – HS & MS NIGHT – MINI LOCK-IN
NOVEMBER 29 – BIG NIGHT OUT – ADVENT *ORNAMENT FUNDRAISER BEGINS*

Brandon Keaton,
Director of Music & Student Ministries
bkeaton@firstmethodistalbany.com

FIRST METHODIST TRIVIA QUIZ:

From your Church Archivists/Historians: Gordon & Meri Beth—(answers on the bottom of the page.) *Verification of answers can be found by a visit to the Historical Room.

1)Before the Martha H. Pelle/Richard P. Wuller, Sr. playground was built between Ford Hall and the sanctuary building, what occupied the space?
2) When the Haley Memorial Youth Center was completed in 1952, what were the after-school programs offered to the youth?

THANK YOU

TO OUR YOUTH SPONSORS!

DON'T FORGET TO DELIVER YOUR NOVEMBER LETTER FOR YOUR STUDENT TO THE FRONT OFFICE BY NOV. 22ND!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SPONSORING A STUDENT, PLEASE CONTACT EMMA AT EKEATON@FIRSTMETHODISTALBANY.COM.

TRIVIA ANSWERS:
1) a hard surface, two-goal basketball court
2) Five afternoons a week from 3:00 PM until 6:00 PM, chaperoned activities included two-lane bowling, playing pool, dancing to 45 records, participating in a photography lab, and enjoying refreshments at a snack bar manned by a volunteer soda jerk.

Fall Hosanna Booster Sunday

HIGH SCHOOL MISSIONS FUNDRAISER

Sunday, November 15th

8:30AM & 10:30AM SERVICE
9:30AM SUNDAY SCHOOL HOUR

Become a Hosanna Booster this fall with a $20 donation. All donations are appreciated and go towards group costs for our 2027 summer Hosanna mission trip.

Welcome Our Newest Members!



Jason, Melissa, Olivia & Emily Griffin
Joined October 4, 2026