



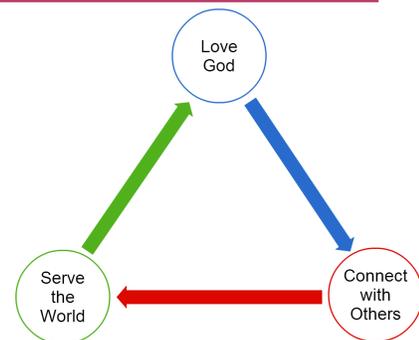
THE MESSENGER

December 2025

Cherry Valley United Methodist Church

Rev. Mark Harkness, Pastor
Pastor's Cell: 331-465-9489
Pastor's E-mail: mark.harkness@gmail.com
Parsonage phone: 815/580-8553

Rev. Danice Loveridge, Deacon
Email: danice.loveridge@gmail.com
Cell phone: 815-509-9445



Our Mission: *Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by loving God, connecting with others, and serving the world.*

A Word From the Pastor

⁸ Once when (Zechariah) was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. ¹⁰ Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹ Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." ¹⁹ The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

(Luke 1:8-20 NRSV)

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Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

We often gloss over the story of John the Baptist's conception as if it were but background narrative setting up the *real* story: the annunciation and Mary's pregnancy leading to Jesus' birth. But it really is so much more than that.

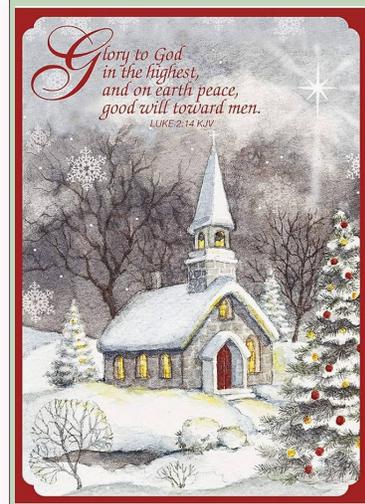
Zechariah and Elizabeth had lived their lives faithfully: to one another and to God. Even though they yearned for a child, that blessing had eluded them. They'd given up on that hope, because in their advanced age it just wasn't realistic. Zechariah says as much to the angel, Gabriel, when told that Elizabeth would bear a son who would himself make a way for the Savior.

Acknowledging her blessing after all these years, Elizabeth hoped but also revealed some doubt by remaining secluded for five months after becoming pregnant. (Lk 1:24)

It had been over three hundred years (maybe closer to four hundred) since the last prophet. Two empires, Macedonian and Roman, had occupied the land. Even though the people hoped, some had given up hope and decided to assent to worldly influence. It'd just been too long and their hope seemed too unlikely if not impossible. It was easy to get discouraged.

Except God had not given up. God was preparing for something greater than ever before. In Jesus, we meet Emmanuel – God with us. Many of us might look to the days following WWII when churches were full and wonder where it has all gone.

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

What we ignore that it was the tragedy of two world wars that reminded people that they needed God and drew them back in with their growing families. It's a cycle that's been repeated in the church over the centuries.

Our congregation (along with many others) is growing older – not just from it's founding but in its membership. Even still, I am convinced that God is preparing to work something new in us – to give birth to new faith that will serve to prepare a way for others to encounter Jesus.

In the movie, *A Christmas Story*, we often think that that Red Rider BB gun was the final blessing in the movie. But might the blessing be that Ralph's jaded, cantankerous old man found joy in the opportunity to bless his son? Ralph prepared the way for that blessing by holding out hope against hope and doing all in his capacity to bring that hope to realization.

Let us continue to continue to hope – to trust – against all that tells us otherwise that God does indeed have a blessing to work out in each of us and as a church – by remaining faithful to God and to one another, and maybe learning from Zechariah not to doubt God's promise.

Your brother in Christ,

Rev. Mark Harkness

Prairie North Conference



Keep up to date with all the Prairie North Conference Events in the weekly email.

Visit the website [Prairie North - Northern Illinois Annual Conference](#). There is also a listing of district contacts at the conference along with achieved newsletters.

Sign up for the weekly e-news by clicking on the latest newsletter and clicking on the "Join Our Email List" in the banner at the top of the page.

Future Dates to Remember

- December 1 10:00 am Advent Bible Study-New Milford*
- December 17..... 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Group*
- December 24..... 7 & 11 pm Christmas Eve Worship*
- December 25..... Christmas Day Church Office Closed*
- December 26..... Church Office Closed*



Members & Friends

- Dwight Banks
- Glenn Carnine
- Dave Dienberg
- Pat Gorsuch
- Trudy Hunt
- Herman Krunfus
- Tim Murphy
- Dana Ward

Military Personnel

- Gage Christensen
- Sean Conderman
- Dan Harter
- Wesley Harter

Mission

- Pastor Kim & the Next Generation Ministry

Those Who Mourn& Conderman/Blanchard Families

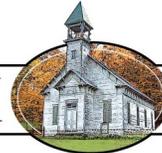


PRAYER REQUESTS: If you have prayer concerns that you wish to express, you may call or email the church office with your requests and the secretary will forward your requests to the church family.

For those in attendance at the Sunday worship services, we have a sharing of joys and concerns that is shared with the church family. If you request prayers but do not want the details of the prayers expressed openly, you may designate that you do not wish to share



CHURCH COUNCIL



The Church Council will not meet in December. The next meeting of the Council will be on January 13 at 6:00 pm. A copy of the minutes of the last meeting will be sent by the secretary to the members of the Council.



Scripture Readings

December 7—Advent 2

Scripture: Psalm 72:1-17
Isaiah 11:1-10
Matthew 3:1-12
Message: "The Bethlehem Candle"

December 14—Advent 3

Scripture: Luke 1:47-55
Isiah 35:1-10
Matthew 11:2-22
Message: "The Shepherd's Candle"

December 21—Advent 4

Scripture: Psalm 80:1-7
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25
Message: "The Angel's Candle"

December 24—Christmas Eve

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20
Message: "Not so Bad"

December 28—1st Sunday of Christmas

Scripture: Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10=18
Matthew 2:13-23
Message: "Love Endures the Plight"



Finance Committee Report

October 2025 General Fund

Total Revenue	\$13,122.00
Total Expenditures	\$13,092.47
Net Revenue	\$ 29.53
Emergency Fund Balance:	\$4,818.74

Effective January 1, 2026, the Special Projects Fund is no longer a Marked Fund and it is replaced by the Emergency Fund.



Pastor Mark's Office Hours:

Mondays—9:30 am - 1 pm
Wednesdays—9:30- noon
Working from
home
Tue & Thurs.
Friday is day off

Pastor Mark's Cell
331-465-9489

Parsonage
815-580-8553

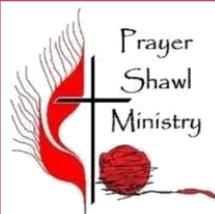


Methodist Women



The Methodist Women will meet on December 14 after worship to conduct the Annual Christmas Cookie Walk, one of our best and most lucrative fundraisers. You may choose homemade cookies and candies, sold by the pound or select one of the delicious breads being offered. Breads are priced individually. Be sure to go early to get a great selection!

Prayer Shawl Group



Check the weekly bulletins or call the church office (815-332-5075) for the information on the host this month. For information about this group, contact Lucy Powell at 815-904-9462 or email lpowell530@yahoo.com.

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study



The Monday Evening Women's Bible study continues to meet on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. Women interested in this group may contact Lucy Powell at 815-904-9462
email: lpowell530@yahoo.com.

All women are welcome

Making one person smile can change the world - maybe not the whole world, but their world.

"Proverbs 16:24 - "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

December 14, 2025

11:00 am - after worship



Homemade Christmas Cookies & Candies
sold by the pound.
Breads are individually priced.
Get treats for a special someone...
or treats for yourself!

All proceeds will benefit the
Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
Missions and Church Project.



ROCK HOUSE KIDS

We still need **80** stockings

**WE ARE COLLECTING CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS
FOR THE ROCK HOUSE KIDS.**

**WE HAVE 120 STOCKINGS TO DATE SO WE ONLY
NEED 80 TO REACH OUR GOAL OF 200 !
WE WILL DELIVER THE STOCKINGS ON
DECEMBER 10TH.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS PROGRAM.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays This Month

- 2 Mike Loveridge
- 6 Delilah Herold
- 10 Carolyn Kloss
- 12 Pat Cowan
- 14 Bill Harned
- 19 Karen Harter
- 20 Veronica Layng
- 22 Lynn Brown
- 26 Ann Harned
- 29 Nola Carnine
- 30 Pat Eickman
- 31 Jenny Dwyer



- 29 Ryan & Jamie Spears



Church Leadership for 2026

2025 Nominations Report, Mark Harkness, Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
Nominations Report 2025 (for 2026)

Church Leadership

Pastor	Rev. Mark Harkness	
Lay Leader	Scott Layng	2027
Recording Secretary	Juanita Barnes	2027
Treasurer	Scott Layng	2027
Financial Secretary	Holly Snyder	2027
Lay Members to AC	Amanda Kloepfer	2028
Membership Secretary	Nancy Laurent	2028
Worship Committee – Chair	Juanita Barnes	2027
Memorials Committee – Chair	Grace Harter	2026

Administrative Council (serves as SPRC/Finance/Trustees)

Pastor	Rev. Mark Harkness	<i>Class</i>	<i>ex officio</i>
Chair	Lucille Powell	2027 (3)	
Vice-Chair	Mary Coulter	2026 (3)	
Lay Leader / Treasurer	Scott Layng	2027 (*)	
SPRC Chair	Cindy Kerr	2026 (4)	
Trustees Chair	Yolanda Beets	2028 (4)	
Finance Chair	Mike Loveridge	2027	
Financial Secretary	Holly Snyder	2027	
Lay Member to Annual Conference	Amanda Kloepfer	2028 (*)	
Recording Secretary	Juanita Barnes	2027 (2)	
At-Large	Charles Schnuckel	2026 (3)	
	David Harter	2026 (3)	

Fundraising/Stewardship Team

Mike Loveridge(Finance Chair)
Lucille Powell
Mary Coulter

Property Team

Dave Anderson
Ray Beets

Nominations Committee

Rev. Mark Harkness (Chair)
Scott Layng (Lay Leader)

Audit Committee

Sally Hollembek
Charlie Schnuckel

Worship Committee

Juanita Barnes (Chair) Ray Beets
Barb Clucas Holly Snyder
Lavern Neff Shirley Cardani
Pat Eichman

Patricia Irps (worship tech)
Mandy Kloepfer (streaming tech)

Committee on Memorials & Gifts

Grace Harter (Chair) 2026
Jordyn Burritt 2028
Lavern Neff 2026
Donna Layng 2026
Jan Mills 2027

2028

Lay Members to Annual Conference
Amanda Kloepfer

NOTE: Numbers in parenthesis next to class year, represent number of consecutive years as SPRC. If asterisk (*) SPRC by office, no-limit.

Congregational Care News

CVUMC now has complimentary CareNotes for you or someone you care about.

These easy to read pamphlets cover a broad range of topics impacting congregants and their families.

Take one for you and one for someone else. Let us know if you need CareNotes on a specific topic not covered.

In the church narthex, you can find CareNotes about aging adults, physical, spiritual and emotional issues.

In the fellowship hall, you can find CareNotes about teen and family issues.



Rockford Rescue Mission

The focus of our giving is the Rockford Rescue Mission. The Rescue Mission is a safe and caring place that offers a Christ-centered care to people struggling with challenges like homelessness, poverty, abuse and addiction.

Rescue those in immediate crisis
Recover people's dignity and sense of self-worth
Restore the lives of men, women and children

The core values of the Rockford Rescue Mission are :

- *Living for the Glory of God*
- *Respecting Human Dignity and Immortality*
- *Proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*
- *Modeling Compassionate Generosity*
- *Partnering with the Church and Community*
- *Serving with Integrity and Excellence*
- *Rejoicing in Lives Changed by God*

Each month the Mission publishes an urgent needs list which we will post in the church. If you do not wish to contribute with goods, you may donate money that may be placed in the donation box in the entrance of the church.



The Blessing of the Shoe Boxes was on Sunday, November 16. There were 71 boxes that were blessed, and in God's perfect timing, two donations were given to Terri Burritt which brought the total raised for the processing of the boxes to what was needed! What a blessing!

Thank you to those who collected items and filled the boxes and thank you to those who gave money donations in order for us to process the boxes. Your support is essential to this program. It couldn't happen without your support!

With your gift, you have helped make Christmas a wonderful time for a child in need somewhere in the world.

To discover more about the Operation Christmas Child, visit the web site at <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Dear friends,

This is a very busy time for all schools. I remember my time at Grace International School. Students were gearing up for semester finals. AP classes also had many deadlines at this point of the school year. The life of the Global Mission Secondary school is no different. Pastor Kim just shared that the Form 2 students are taking their national exams which will last one full week. As Pastor Kim has shared in the past, these exams are critical for the future steps in the student's lives at the school. It is obviously a major test. Their first exam will be "Civics."

To prepare the students for this week's challenge, the students participated in Holy Communion and entered the exam rooms with the warm encouragement of the whole school community. She also asked all the parents to pray for the students. I marvel and respect how Pastor Kim has incorporated everyone in these prayers. When she first started the school, asking the students and the parents to participate in the Christian act of prayer was new. Now it is a part of their daily routine.

With God's grace we grow together!
Your friend in Christ and retired missionary

Judy Long

Special Prayer Request: *When Pastor Kim visited our area this past summer, she met with the Bishop and others at the Northern Illinois Conference to ask them to help fund her high school building project through the Bishop's Special Appeal of 2026. Her funding goal is \$400,000. After review the council agreed with the request with the caveat that she produces a video and brochure by the end of this calendar year. In the midst of an already busy time of year, she needs prayer for clarity and vision and of course the energy to complete the request...As you are able, please pray!*

Information about the Global Mission Secondary School and the school's mission can be found on the bulletin board in the sanctuary and on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. The latest newsletter and other information is posted when we receive them. Please feel free to take the information and read it.



Our Missionary in Tanzania

Young Seon (Christina) Kim continues her mission to help bring secondary education to the people of Tanzania with the construction of The Global Mission Secondary School.

DONATIONS:

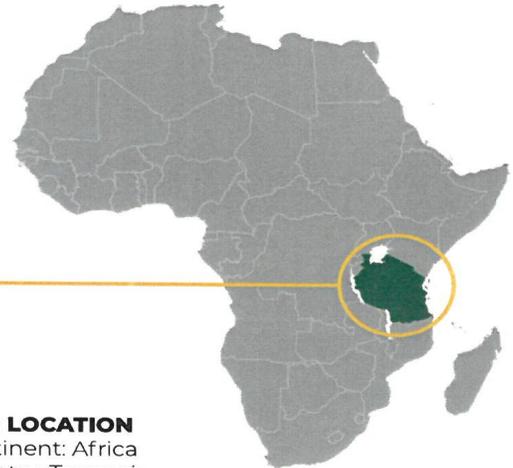
You may send a check to:
Advance GCFA
P.O. Box 9068
New York, NY10087-9068
With the advance
number on the memo line
Advance # 3022281

Contact information for Young
Seon Kim
Telephone: +255 68 976 1708
Email: yskim1023@gmail.com
Facebook: Young Seon Kim
Kakaotalk: yskim1470



GLOBAL MISSION SECONDARY SCHOOL

Let us support HOPES & DREAMS of youth in Tanzania



SITE LOCATION

Continent: Africa
Country: Tanzania
Region: Dar es Salaam
District: Ilala



December 2025

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1 10:00 am Advent Bible Study @ New Milford 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	2 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	3 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice	4 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	5	6 9:00 am GA
7 10:00 am Worship Advent 2—Peace 	8 10:00 am Advent Bible Study @ New Milford 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	9 6:00 pm Church Council 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	10 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice	11 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	12	13 9:00 am GA
14 10:00 am Worship Advent 3 11:00 am Cookie Walk 	15 10:00 am Advent Bible Study @ New Milford 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	16 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	17 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Group 2:00 pm Choir Practice	18 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	19	20 9:00 am GA
21 10:00 am Worship Advent 4 	22 10:00 am Advent Bible Study @ New Milford 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	23 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	24 7 pm & 11 pm Christmas Eve Worship 	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed 	26 Church Office Closed	27 9:00 am GA
28 10:00 am Worship 1st Sunday After Christmas Day	29 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	30 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	31 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice			

Messenger Items are due on the 15th of each month.



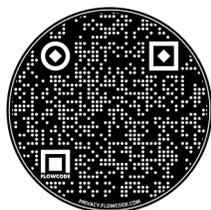
Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
Upcoming Events

December 24
7:00 pm
Christmas Eve Worship

December 24
11:00 pm
Christmas Eve Worship



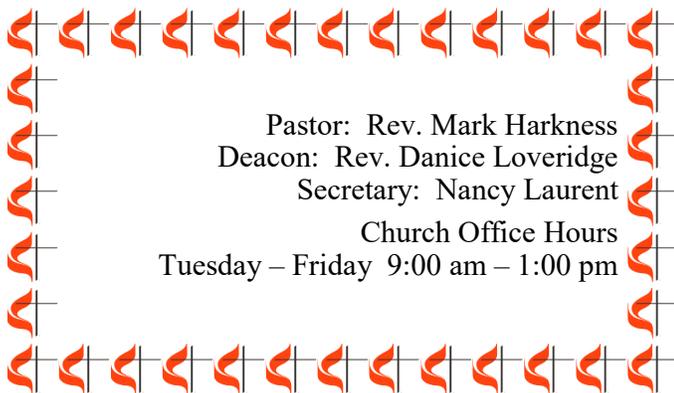
Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
112 South Cherry Street, P.O. Box 235
Cherry Valley, Illinois 61016



Sunday@ 10:00 am—In-person Worship
Live You Tube streaming at Cherry Valley
United Methodist Church.

Contact us:

Office phone: 815/332-5075
E-mail: churchinthevalley@comcast.net
Web Site: cherryvalleyumc.com
Facebook: Cherry Valley United Methodist Church



Pastor: Rev. Mark Harkness
Deacon: Rev. Danice Loveridge
Secretary: Nancy Laurent

Church Office Hours
Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm