

THE MESSENGER

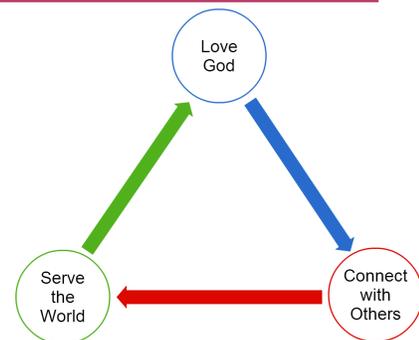
January 2026

Cherry Valley United Methodist Church

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

Rev. Danice Loveridge, Deacon
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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

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'*² *He called a child, whom he put among them,*³ *and said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'*⁴ *Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*⁵ *Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.*

⁶ 'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

(Mt 18:1-6 NRSV)

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

1 Cor. 13:11 NRSV)

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"...ask where the good way is; and walk in it and find rest for the soul"

Jeremiah 6:16



Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

In my previous appointment, the congregation participated in an after-school program with students who were struggling. One of the particular challenges was Mathematics – really just “simple” arithmetic. As a student, I excelled at math including three semesters of college calculus. But I was befuddled. Rather than noting that four plus seven equaled eleven, or that three multiplied by five equaled fifteen, and that swapping the order (seven plus four, or five times three) yielded the same result, these students were expected to use charts and knuckle counting to calculate the solutions. Whatever happened to memorizing arithmetic tables?

The new pedagogy rightly asserts that it's important for students to understand “how” four plus seven equals eleven; but it also spends so much time on the mechanism that it forgets the goal – calculating the correct sum. I grant that a complete understanding of the underlying theory allows for more in depth mathematical exploration. But honestly, except for technical professions, how many of us use anything more than arithmetic or simple algebra in our day to day lives. I can't remember the last time I “needed” to use the Pythagorean Theorem or to calculate an integration using calculus. I know that I've never pondered a differential equation for anything other than a university exam.

When I was a child - thinking like a child - reasoning like a child, I trusted the simple (and accurate) explanations of my teachers about how the arithmetic tables functioned and was satisfied to memorize. As a result, I can do calculate change in my head or discern whether the bigger box of cereal is really a better value. That simplicity is liberating.

But what does any of that have to do with church? With our faith? With God?

To begin with, Jesus invites us to have simple trusting faith in God's love. That doesn't mean that there isn't more to know. Nor we should limit ourselves only to what we learned as children in faith.

In the gospel, we hear that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that whoever believes in him might not perish – while insisting that we continue into the next verse which states – for God did not send his son to condemn the world but so that the **world** (everyone) might be saved (healed) through him. (John 3:16-1)

(Continued on page 2)



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How did you first learn about Jesus' love? What was it about Sunday School or VBS? What was it about a mission trip or volunteer service?

Let's go back to math for a moment. January 1 is Christmas Eve plus eight. By custom, the eighth day was when Jesus would have been named and become an "official" person. Our new year begins with Jesus. This new year, 2026 marks the 174th anniversary of this congregation. As we look toward 175 years in 2027, how can we reclaim simple ways of sharing the Gospel so that others in order to kindle hope in our community stemming from an uncomplicated expression of our faith in God's love?

Your brother in Christ,

Rev. Mark Harkness



Lord please hear my prayer



Members & Friends

- Dwight Banks
- Glenn Carnine
- Pat Gorsuch
- Sally Hollembeak
- 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&



District prayer focus in January 2026

- Week of 4th - NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE BISHOP & CABINET**
- Week of 11th - MOUNT CARROLL UMC, THOMSON UMC & ARGO FAY UMC- Pastor Dean Wright**
- Week of 18th - BELVIDERE: IGLESIA ESPERANZE Y VIDA NFC - Pastor Ivan Sarabia**
- Week of 25th - CHADWICK: HOPE UMC & HICKORY GROVE UMC - Pastor Richard Ottens**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" - Philippians 4:6

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



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.

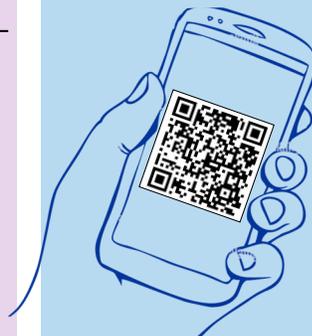
Sign up for the weekly e-news by clicking on the latest newsletter and clicking on the "Join Our Email List" in the banner at the top of the page.

Future Dates to Remember

- January 1... ..New Year's Day (Church Office Closed)**
- January 11. 11:00 am remove Christmas Decorations**
- January 13. 6:00 pm Church Council Meeting**
- January 21. 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Group**
- January 30. 5:00 pm Scout set up for Derby**
- January 31. 9:00 am Scout Derby Day**



The Church Council will meet on Tuesday, January 13th 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

January 4—Epiphany Sunday

Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service

January 11—Baptism of Our Lord

Scripture: 29

Isaiah 42:1-9; Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

Message: TBA

January 18—2nd Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Psalm 49:1-7

Isaiah 49:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

Message: TBA

January 25—3rd Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

Isaiah 9:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

Message: TBA



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



GREAT NEWS! The Women's Group had another successful Cookie Walk! Thanks to the donations of the bakers and to the generosity of the buyers, the Women's Group has \$343 to donate to the Emergency Fund. Thank you for your support of the Cookie Walk!

Watch the weekly bulletins and emails for the next meeting time of the Methodist Women. We will gather to discuss Valentines Day Cards and Shrove Tuesday activities.

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study



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

All women are welcome

Prayer Shawl Group



The Prayer Shawl Group will meet on Wednesday, January 21st. Check the weekly bulletins or call the church office at 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.

Finance Committee Report

November 2025 General Fund:

Total Revenue: \$9,289.70

Total Expenses: \$11,740.17

Net Revenue: -2,450.47

Emergency Fund: \$5,618



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

Rock House Kids Christmas Stockings



Thank you to everyone who donated Christmas stockings to the Rock House Kids.

Special thanks to Donna Layng who headed up this drive and then delivered the stockings to RHK.

Greeter/Liturgist Sign-Up Sheets

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to the following people who have volunteered to be door greeters throughout 2025: Juanita Barnes, Donna Layng and the Layng Family, Ray and Yolanda Beets, LaVern Neff and Grace Harter, Mark and Sandy Greef, Patricia Eickman, Dave and Shirley Cardani, Sherry Gordon, Jan and Dave Mills. Sandy Schwartz and Karen Harter

GREETER AND LITURGISTS...WE NEED YOU! The Greeter and Liturgist sign up sheets for the coming months are on the clipboards on the table in the sanctuary.

Please look over the dates and select at least one Sunday in which you can take part in these very important aspects of the worship service. If you have never greeted or been a liturgist, speak with Juanita Barnes who will help you through the process.

Being a greeter—Your smile and the welcome that you extend to every person who comes into the church on Sunday can set the tone of a person’s worship experience. It can also be the way in which that person perceives the church as a whole.

A liturgist actively shapes and leads the communal worship experience, fostering a deep connection with the congregation by guiding them through prayer and scripture, contributing to a richer spiritual life for the church community. Being a liturgist can, in turn, deepen one’s own personal faith. What do you say? Can we count on you?



“Because God has welcomed you, it falls to you to welcome others.”

—Author Unknown

January Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays This Month

- 3 Jan Mills
- 5 Danice Loveridge
Kathleen Sundberg
- 7 Connor Kloss
- 10 Deb Voorhies
- 18 Jordyn Nystrom
Nick Brown
- 27 Susan Harkness
Lavern Neff
- 28 David Anderson
Donna Layng
- 31 Jim Coulter
Jenny Dwyer



- 4 Chad & Cheryl
Hollemeak
- 7 Keith & Terri Burritt
Chuck & Deb Voorhies



Many thanks to our Audio/Visual team, Dave Harter, Patricia Irps and Mandy Kloepfer. Be sure to let them know you appreciate the work they do.



Congregational Care News

Check out the CVUMC complimentary CareNotes available 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.



Changing Paraments for the Season



We will be removing the Christmas decorations on Sunday, January 11th. All who are able to help are welcome to take part. We will put up other banners at this time. At a later date, we will prepare the sanctuary for the season of Lent on or about February 15th.

Begin Ash Wednesday with Ashes

Pastor Harkness will conduct a brief Ash Wednesday service

At 9:00 am on

Wednesday, February 18th.

All are welcome to attend.



Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

—Eckhart Tolle—

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 envelopes available on the table in the sanctuary.

Cherry Valley United Methodist Church - 2026 Budget (Proposal)

Apportionments	12,000.00	Parsonage	
Total Apportionments	\$12,000.00	Electricity	2,000.00
		Gas	700.00
Building and Grounds		Sewer	500.00
Electricity	6,000.00	Water	1,200.00
Gas	4,500.00	Disposal	250.00
Sewer	200.00	Phone (Internet)	1,300.00
Water	500.00	Maintenance	1,000.00
Equip & Supplies	600.00	Total Parsonage	\$6,950.00
Prop & Liability Ins & workma	10,000.00		
Prop Maint.	8,000.00	Church Office	
Total Building and Grounds	\$29,800.00	Office Equip/Maint	1,000.00
		Office Supplies	400.00
Clergy Support		Postage	300.00
Health Insurance	17,000.00	Telephone & Internet	2,000.00
Pension	8,000.00	Web Design/Maint.	400.00
Reimb. - Pastor	3,500.00	Church Software and Elec. Giving	2,000.00
Total Clergy Support	\$28,500.00	Total Office	\$6,100.00
Ministry Programs		Payroll	
Church School Education	\$200.00	Pastor	42,230.00 3%
Worship Supplies	\$300.00	Secretary	13,831.00 3%
Sub Musicians	\$250.00	Music Director	13,732.00 3%
CCLI	\$260.00	Custodian	5,000.00
Outreach	\$450.00	Nursery	1,040.00
Missions (Pastor Kim)	\$ 1,200.00	Payroll Taxes	2,500.00
Total Ministry Programs	\$2,660.00	Pulpit Supply	600.00
		Total Payroll	\$78,933.00
Total 2026 Budget	\$164,943.00		
Rev.1			
10.17.25			

The following is an excerpt from Pastor Kim's Year-end Newsletter. You may read it in its entirety on the bulletin board in the sanctuary along with the graduation program.

Greetings in the name of the Lord.

On November 29, we held our second graduation ceremony. Even now, there are moments when I still cannot believe that Global Mission Secondary School stands here today. Sometimes I climb the prayer tower alone, look over the campus, and praise the greatness of God. It has been five years since we opened the school, and now we have graduated our second class—my heart is full beyond words.

Over four years:

- a student named Rinael, who could not speak a single word of English, came to dream of becoming a doctor.
- Nestory, who had limited vision in one eye, graduated as the top student.
- Donald, who once harbored anger toward God, restored his relationship with Him.
- Seven graduates received baptism from me. During the graduation ceremony, I was especially joyful watching two Muslim-background students dance as they declared, "I have decided to follow Jesus."
- I already miss 27 graduates who have taken such bold steps toward their future with hope and vision.

One of the most challenging experiences of 2025 was helping Griffin, a student suffering from microtia, receive surgery in Korea. While praying and searching for a doctor, I was led to Professor Ho-Jin Park at Korea University Anam Hospital. Through that connection, Griffin became part of the hospital's Global Life-Giving Project and was scheduled to receive surgery free of charge. After hearing the news, all GMSS parents generously contributed to cover Griffin's airfare and some living expenses in Korea, and the need was met very quickly. In my 13 years of ministry and mission in Tanzania, I had never seen local people give financially so promptly. It was truly the work of the Holy Spirit. Even now, I often think, "What would have happened if I had disobeyed the Holy Spirit's guidance during prayer that day?" Sometimes when the Lord asks us to do things that seem impossible, instead of saying "I can't" or "It won't work," we simply need to obey first. He is the Way Maker—the One who makes a way where there seems to be none.

Next year 2026 will be a significant year as we begin the construction of the high school, and I anticipate many challenges along the way. Already, some things are not unfolding according to plan. Yet I firmly believe that God's mission is accomplished by God Himself. Even when I cannot see clearly, I trust that God is at work. Therefore, I continue to pray for my good health, patience to endure, and discernment to walk faithfully.

Over the past 13 years, my Heavenly Father has never allowed me to serve with a mindset of being a poor missionary. Instead of worrying about finances, He has consistently led me to boldly share God's vision and invite people of faith to participate in His work. I believe this coming year will be no exception. I would like to invite you to be part of our new vision to build a high school that will raise Christian leaders who will serve both locally and globally. I am confident that I will be able to share many powerful testimonies of God's faithfulness at this time of next year. Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth!

Following the Word, led by the Holy Spirit—
Sincerely yours from Tanzania,
Missionary Christina/Young Seon Kim

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
EXCELLENCE 2021

Celebrating our
2nd GRADUATION CEREMONY

GLORY TO GOD, OUR WAY MAKER!



January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	2	3 9:00 am GA
4 10:00 am Worship	5 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	6 6:00 pm Church Council 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	7 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice	8 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	9	10 9:00 am GA
11 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Removal of Christmas Decorations	12 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	13 <i>6:00 pm Church Council</i> 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	14 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice	15 6:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Cub Scouts	16	17 9:00 am GA
18 10:00 am Worship	19 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	20 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	21 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Group 2:00 pm Choir Practice	22	23	24 9:00 am GA
25 10:00 am Worship	26 6:00 Scouts BSAG 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study	27 6:30 pm Scouts BSAB	28 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm Choir Practice	29	30 Scouts Derby Set Up	31 9:00 am GA Scouts Derby Set Up

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

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength
of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

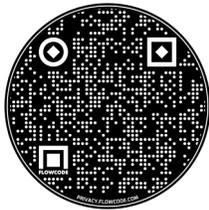
Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
Upcoming Events

January 1
New Year's Day
Church Office Closed

January 13
6:00 pm
Church Council Meeting



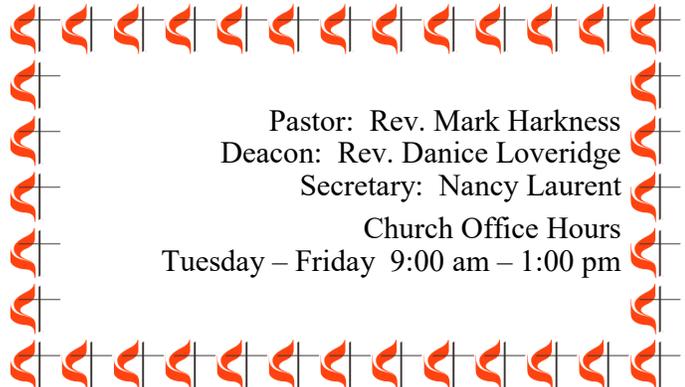
Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
112 South Cherry Street, P.O. Box 235
Cherry Valley, Illinois 61016



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