NEW BEGINNINGS

BONFIELD - GRAND PRAIRIE PARISH

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." -- John Wesley





Where has the year gone? It feels like it was just a few weeks ago that I wrote the first article for 2022 and suddenly this is the last one of the year. I can safely say that we have done plenty this year, and that as a Parish we have made strides to put the Pandemic behind us.

2022 saw a return to the County West mid-week Lenten services at various locations that were well attended each week. There was a good turnout for the Easter Egg Hunt in early April, despite the cool morning we had. We had Holy Week services at Evan that were well attended. I was Blessed to be a part of the group walking with a cross throughout Bonfield on Good Friday. The Lenten Bible study that I tried to do in 2020 was completed this year. As a Parish we were able in June to FINALLY go to Red Bird Mission in Kentucky for our Mission Trip. Personally, it was an experience I will always remember!

July saw our first in-person VBS in three years. It was a wonderful time and I'm hoping we can build on this event in the coming years to have even more involvement. There was a wonderful turnout for the outdoor service in the park in August, most of us even managed to stay dry during the rain that fell for part of the service. September our outdoor concert turned into an indoor event thanks to rain, but it turned out to be one of the largest crowds the Rivers of Life Clergy Band has ever played for!

These were the Parish events from this year, and I have probably missed mentioning one or two. The individual churches had events that were wonderful as well. In addition, both churches have done so much outreach this year to the area and beyond.

2022 is not completely finished though! We have Advent services that have started. We have

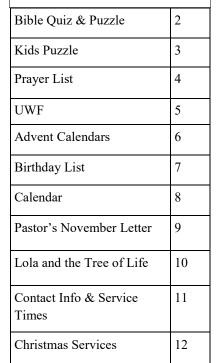
Christmas programs at each church in December as well as a Christmas Eve service at Evan. If you want to know more about what will be happening in December, please read the pages inside this newsletter.

So, what will 2023 bring to the Parish? Our NOW committee is working on events to provide outreach and hopefully bring people into the churches. Other committees are working on events as well at each church. It's safe to say that we are continuing to put the Pandemic behind us and we continue try to find ways to have those who either have not come back to church yet or to bring those who are seeking to find a church home to step inside the doors on Sunday mornings.

As your Pastor, I feel more Blessed today than I did on July 1, 2019 when I started serving this Parish. I love the village of Bonfield and the surrounding area, as well as the people I serve. My hope is that all of you have a safe and Blessed rest of this year as we remember why we prepare for the annual celebration of God coming to us in human form as a baby born

Your Humble Servant, Pastor Keith

to a virgin in a humble stable.



Inside this issue:



TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET

Matthew 1:22. ESV

A prayer for Christmas

The internet reveals little about Wilda English only that she lived from 1916 to 1997 and once resided in California. No details exist about her family, work or interests. Just this prayer, widely shared online. And it is no small thing. Indeed, the prayer tells much about her faith. God bless Wilda English for sharing these words with the world. May they continue to inspire many!

God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith; the warmth of Christmas, which is love; the radiance of Christmas, which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth; the all of Christmas, which is Christ.

December Memory Verse

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ~ Luke 2:11

Bible Quiz

Complete this Bible verse: "The (1) (2) (3) and the (3) has not overcome it."

- A. (1) Word; (2) speaks; (3) silence
- B. (1) light; (2) shines; (3) darkness
- C. (1) kingdom of God; (2) reigns;
- (3) world
- D. (1) Spirit of God; (2) shines;
 - (3) world
- E. None of the above



Answer: B (See John 1:5.)

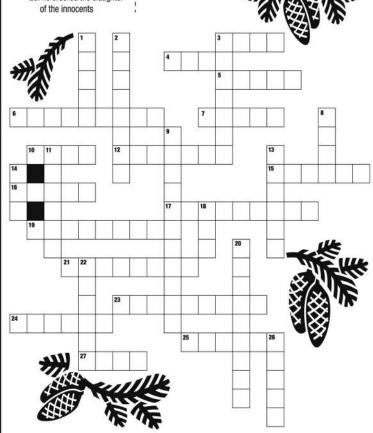
Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

ACROSS

- DOWN 1. song
- 2. keeper of sheep
- 3. Anointed One
- 8. a gift of the magi
- 9. red plants
- 11. comina
- 13. Jesus
- 14. 12th month (abbrev.)
- 18 B&B
- 20. a form of holly
- 22. heavenly messengers
- 26, he ordered the slaughter

- 3. wise men
- 4. author of the most famous
- Christmas account
- 5. red-suited gift-giver
- 6. of Ephrathah 7. presents
- 10. Gabriel came to her
- 12. has a red nose
- 15. "Messiah" composer 16. northern little helpers
- 17. patron saint of children
- 19. made flesh
- 21, home for Mary
- 23. tree decorations
- 24. crib
- 25. he was a carpenter





23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Mick, 19. incarnate, 21. Nazareth, 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 20. mistletoe, 22. angels, 26. Herod; ACROSS 3. magi, 4. Luke, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold,



I apprentice all the help I received during the time I was not able to do my duties. Vickie, Hope, & Chad especially helped with my duties. Thank you to all those who called,

sent cards, sent texts, sent messages, and lifted me in prayer. They all meant a lot to me during my time of healing and pain. I have been healing well and my doctor has cleared me to drive, which is wonderful! ~ Susie (Evans) Clutter



The Love offering of \$614.00 that was taken at the Rivers of Life Clergy Band concert in September was sent to UMCOR to aid in Florida hurricane relief.

Thank you to all who attended the concert and helped provide to the offering! Pastor Keith

Christmas crackups

Enjoy these kid-friendly holiday jokes!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?

Cookie sheets.

What do you sing at a snowman's birth-day party?

"Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

What is a Christmas tree's favorite candy?

Ornamints.

What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"? Santa walking backward.

Why did Rudolph get a bad report card? *Because he went down in history.*

What is an elf's favorite kind of music? *Wrap music!*

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? *Nothing. It was on the house!*

What kind of photos do Santa's helpers take? *Elfies*.



Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

Shepherds
Child
Nazareth
Census
Baby
David
Mary
Travel
Town
Register
Born
Night

T	В	W	Υ	Α	Z	K	E	S	Н	N	G	D	J	K
Q	0	Y	Α	Р	R	Α	L	В	F	P	1	С	Q	L
N	R	W	X	В	Е	Υ	R	М	В	D	М	0	Е	Е
s	N	0	N	W	G	Α	1	В	Α	С	D	0	Т	D
R	G	X	J	F	1	W	М	٧	В	R	R	С	E	0
Р	S	С	Ε	N	S	U	S	Н	Υ	U	Υ	F	Р	N
0	T	P	1	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	М	U	S	Т
0	Α	N	D	В	Ε	С	Н	I	L	D	N	Z	F	Α
Α	Т	В	Α	U	R	W	Н	G	F	٧	Α	В	U	М
Т	R	Α	٧	Е	L	J	С	Н	٧	0	Z	G	N	Н
F	В	Q	1	W	D	X	Р	Т	Ε	N	Α	0	L	Q
Z	С	R	D	Q	S	Н	Ε	Р	Н	Ε	R	D	s	٧
R	U	٧	Υ	K	N	1	R	Т	K	G	Ε	Y	1	R
Κ	٧	Α	Z	X	L	S	Н	Y	T	Р	Т	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	М	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	Н	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a ____ _ _ _ has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV



Pastor Keith invites you to join in praying for the following names and causes.

From Our Church Bulletin:

Candy Bauer, Charles Blankenship, Jay Buente, Ron Cordes, Benny Cruse, Virginia Dittus, Pearl Evans, Bob Grob, Marjorie Kersch, Maggie Maxwell (Bob Nichols' sister), Dora (Kim Metzka's sister in law), Allen Messer, Sunshine Powell, Chuck Quick, Kurt Quick, Dorothy Riegel, Stan Stone, Jackie Wagner, & Ronald Wildman

Arden Courts
Mel Brinkman

Bourbonnais Grove
Mary Krieg

At Home Pearl Evans

Courtyard Estates of Herscher
Marjorie Kersch

Marjorie Kersch Randy Riegel

At College

Gretchen Brinkman Manteno Veterans

Mary Grace Brinkman Bob Grob

Becca Coffman

Jenna Kenning Heritage Woods

Nickolas Kirchner Vi Morse Kylie & Kamden Lockwood Isabell Lowey

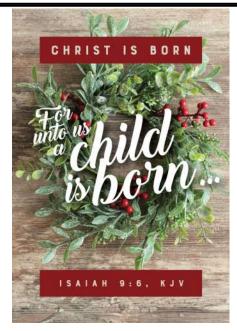
Compassion International Kids

Ebenezer Forson	Ghana
Melany Samantha	Aguilera
Sonaton Soren	Bangladesh
Janny Boya	Ecuador
Witney Juarez	Guatemala
Janny Boya	Ecuador
Lucky Hubiagbe	Ghana

Do you or your family sponsor a compassion international kid? If so, please contact the office if you are still sponsoring a kid, 815-802-9805 or bonfieldgp@gmail.com.

I want to thank the Parish for my Pastor Appreciation gift in October! I have already ordered tickets for a play at the Kankakee Valley Theatre Association

and am looking forward to seeing this and many other plays in the near future. ~ Pastor Keith



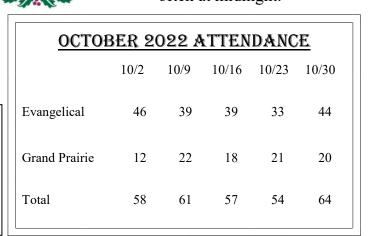
A prayer to the Christ-child: You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.

—Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

+Christian Symbol+

CANDLE

The candle symbolizes Jesus being the light of the world (John 8:12), as well as his call for Christians to be lights (Matthew 5:14). Candles play a prominent role in the Christmas season. Each candle on an Advent wreath has a special meaning. Many churches have a candlelight worship service on Christmas Eve, often at midnight.





United Women in Faith of the Parish

Purpose of the United Women in Faith -The organized unit of United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in global ministries of the church.

Evan UWF - On November 3rd, the Bonfield United Women in Faith met in the upper room. The meeting was open with a devotional given by Carol Buente. 'Walk with Jesus During the day'. You will be strengthened by His Grace and have peace. She also gave the Cunningham report. See their news letter or website to read about new programs and the coffee shop. They have a Christmas Wish List and it will be in the bulletin. Things are running smooth in all programs. Christmas giving was discussed. It was requested to raise the offerings this year and it was passed, also UMCOR was added for this year. Pastor, gave the lesson, "Giving Thanks". He named women of the Bible that encourage us. He said there were 21 women named or referred to. He explain how each has gave encouragement to us. He closed by saying "We all face different situations but God will bless us just as He did them. Joyce Riegel read from Response about how the World Thank Offering is Life giving. "Creation and Transformation". Chris Meyer talked about missionaries. We will bring in our birthdates' at the next meeting. We will be given a Missionary who has the same birthday, we can then correspond with them. The meeting was closed in prayer. A delicious lunch was served by Chris Meyer. Our Christmas Luncheon will be December 8th at the Herscher Restaurant, at 11:30. You can bring a guest. You will need to RSVP to Chris Meyer or Dayle Seitz. There were 7 members and Pastor present. 14 sick calls and many Thinking of you, Birthday Cards and Thanksgiving Cards Sent. Dayle Seitz, Secretary

Evan UWF Meetings

December: 1st - VRD Executive Team Meeting/Christmas Gathering at Bradley Wesley UMC, 8th - UWF Christmas Party at the Herscher restaurant at 11:30am



Martha Circle

- All meetings will begin at 6pm.
- Meetings are held at hostesses' homes or other locations.
- Watch for announcements in the bulletin and text messages
- The Hostesses will provide the devotional for the evening and small snacks are served. Dec. 14 ~Kim & Marilyn Ohrt





December 2 Dave Spinale

December 3 Laura Hanson

December 4 Mark Meyer, Jerry Wells, Larry Hansen

December 5 Kylie Lockwood

December 7 Donna (Baylor) Osenga, Braden Cordes

December 8 Gina Hansen

December 9 Judy (Orwig) Mau, Barry Messer,

Lee Bauer

December 10 Ellynnor Grace Julia Ruckman

December 11 Dale Schroeder, Matthew Martin Loyd

December 12 Danielle Norton

December 13 Steve Buente

December 14 Justin Fritz, Joshua Fritz, Dave Osenga, **Brittany Ricketts**

December 15 Brian Clemans, Ed Buente, Tom Shimmin, Shirley (Hanneford) Hertz, Alex R. Berghouse,

December 16 Mandy McMurray, Glenn Wulff, Bruce Philips

December 17 Ryan Charter, Vicki (Buza) Brinkman, Brock Wenzelman

December 18 Ralph Rice, Jr., Shelly (Gates) Messer, Miria Lee (Lehnus) Hester

December 19 Brian Wells, Susan (Vilt) Mickelson

December 20 Daisy (Johnson) Rice, Michele Wilson

December 21 Kathi Nichols, Christian Hansen, Angela (Diefenbach) Kirk

December 23 Rick Overacker

December 24 Keith Bauer, Jeff Nottke, Francis Rice

December 25 Greg Hertz, Tara St. Germaine,

Jessica (Dixon) Gagnon

December 26 Rory Havener

December 27 Madison Turner

December 28 Daniel Meyer, Justin Corden Ruckman

December 29 Cindi Young

December 30 Sarah Rieke, Jamie Diefenbach,

Dale Schreffler

Please notify the church office of any names and birthdays which need to be added, removed or corrected.



Coal City UMC 6805 E McArdle Rd Coal City, IL 60416 on December 21 at 6pm Cropsey UMC 22346 N 3850 East Rd. Cropsey, IL 61731 on December 21 at 7pm Bradley Evangelical 600 W Broadway Bradley, IL 60915 on December 21at 4pm and it will be in the Fellowship Hall so folks do not have to worry about the steep ramp or the stairs ristmas A Service of Remembrance & Hope 🕻



If inclement weather happens, make sure to check our Facebook page or website for updates to know if church will be cancelled.

Facebook - www.facebook.com/ bonfieldgpparish Website - www. bonfieldgrandprairie.org



Join us for a Youth Group meeting, Youth Group meets every second Sunday of the month at Evan at 6:30pm.

Contact Ryan at coffmanry@gmail.com for more info.

GAMES - SNACKS - FUN A TIME TO TALK ABOUT GOD IN AN OPEN, HONEST, AND REAL WAY!

Our Community Youth Group is open to all youth in 6th through 12th grade and all denominations. Our Youth Leader is Ryan Coffman (coffmanry@gmail.com). Ryan is a member of Grand Prairie UMC.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				_	2	3
4 - Second Sunday of Advent	5 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	6 - IHOP Fellowship Breakfast at 8:30AM	7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8 - Evan UWF Christmas Lunch at Herscher Restaurant at 11:30am	6	01
11 - Third Sunday of Advent - Grand Prairie Christmas Program at 7pm	12 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	13 - Evan NOW Meeting at Evan at 6pm - Parish NOW Meeting at 6xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	14 - Martha Circle	15 - Printing the Newsletter - Sunshine Circle at Evan at 6:30pm	91	17
18 - Fourth Sunday of Advent - Evan Christmas Program during 10am service	19 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	20 - Newsletter Article Deadline 9AM	21 - First Day if Winter	22	23	24 - Christmas Eve Service at Evan at 4pm
25 - Christmas Day	26 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	27 -Fold Newsletters at Evan at 8AM	28	29	30	31 - New Year's Eve

Pastor's Letter from November - This is the month that we focus on Thanksgiving. The final few weeks of the church year. Harvesting is getting closer to being completed for this year. Things are inching closer to normal than we have been in nearly three years. The daylight continues to be shorter each day. But we still have plenty of events to finish out this year.

Inside this month's newsletter you will find the grand total that was given by both churches in the Parish in noisy change during September to help Fortitude in their mission of helping those in need. And that total was doubled as I was glad to match everything given. Thanks to everyone who brought out their change!

I want to thank everyone who took the time to send me cards and gifts in recognition of Pastor Appreciation Month in October. God continues to BLESS me by allowing me to serve as your Pastor. Your kindness is so humbling to me every day. I will continue to do my best to serve here for as long as I am allowed to, learning from mistakes I may make along the way. But I can't do any of what I do without the support of everyone in the Parish. I give thanks to the tireless efforts of so many at each church who volunteer their time on committees. Also, those who help provide outreach to others in the area and around the world.

I also appreciate the help I receive from our Parish secretary Hope. She does so much in her job serving the parish. Without her, my duties would be much more difficult. And she often keeps me on task and in line in my duties as your Pastor.

November will bring our annual Community Thanksgiving service on the 13th. Inside the newsletter you will find all of the details for this event, including practice times for the Community choir that anyone is welcome to be a part of! Towards the end of the month both churches will be hanging the greens as we prepare for the Advent season. We will also be having a guest speaker on November 13th who will hopefully help those who may be struggling with their mental health, especially with the past two+ years we have been through.

As this arrives in your mail, I will be wrapping up a two-week vacation. A time for me to relax as well as energize myself for what the end of the year will bring to our Parish. I would like to thank everyone at both churches who filled in for services in my absence.

Let us finish out this year on a high note and try to 'give thanks' to those deserving it. Until next month, Blessings to all! - Pastor Keith

Amount Raised for Fortitude with Noisy Change - Amount raised by the Parish \$842.96 & matched by Pastor Keith for a total of \$1,685.92 donated to Fortitude. What a blessing to be able to donate to an organization helping those in our area that need help.



The upside-down of Christmas

Theologian Halford Luccock once saw a shopper "who looked like an animated Christmas tree with packages dangling from every limb." When he retrieved some dropped bags, she grumbled that Christmas "turns everything upside down." Luccock replied, "That is just what it was made for!" He explained: "Christmas is a story about a baby, and that is a baby's chief business, turning things upside down. ... A baby in a family divides time into two eras, just as Christmas does. There is B.C., which means 'before child,' and A.D., which means 'after deluge.'"

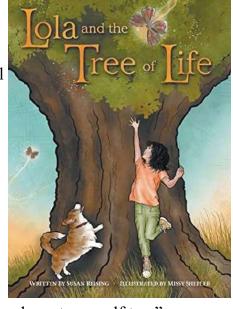
When God became flesh, the lowly, last, least and lost were exalted, added Luccock. As a result, "the locked-up treasures of kindliness and sympathy come from the inside of the heart, where they are often kept imprisoned, to the outside of actual expression in deed and word." The Christ-child "enables all [people] to get at the best treasures of their lives and offer them for use."

"Lola and the Tree of Life" book:

East Peoria resident Susan Reising, Donna Voigt's niece, wrote "Lola and the Tree of Life" to prepare children for the death of a loved one or pet. The goal was to create a positive understanding of the natural cycle of life. Children also learn that, though their loved one may be gone, the person or pet will live on in the child's memories.

Reising wrote the book in the late 1990s, but in the age before self-publishing it was difficult to bring a book project to fruition. The original book sat on a shelf for many years until recent events prompted her to give it another shot.

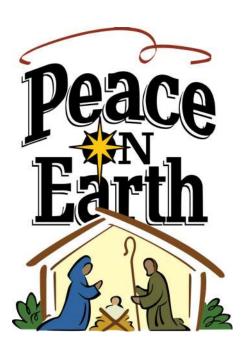
"Fast forward to 2020, and you know what's going on in 2020 – all those years of political divisiveness, families are split down the middle and then we've got COVID," Reising said. "It's just some really tough times for so many people, especially kids. We don't have vaccines yet and grandparents are dying or getting really sick. I just really wanted to do something to give hope to people, and I needed to give hope to myself too."

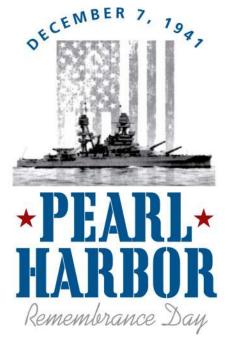


She re-worked the story and called illustrator Missy Shepler, who had illustrated the original book. The Chillicothe-based artist was happy to create new drawings for the updated version. "It is about impending loss, so it helps prepare kids before the loss happens," she said. "Once the loss happens, whether it is a pet or a grandparent or, God forbid, a parent, the adults around the child are probably not at their best. By laying this foundation, it helps them have something to build on, and hopefully does less damage to the child who is trying to understand what is happening, because at 4 or 5 years old, they don't necessarily understand what death is."

Extra resources for families available on lolaandthetreeoflife.com can help adults delve deeper into the topic with their child. The website also includes fun activities for kids, including illustrations which can be printed and colored, and a find-the-word puzzle. The book is available online at

lolaandthetreeoflife.com, Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com.





6 THINGS TO KNOW OVERWHELMED

- 1 God has a plan for you.

 Jeremiah 29:11
- 2 God will make your "storm" calm. Mark 4:35-41
- **3** When you get off course, God will straighten your direction. *Proverbs 3:5-6*
- 4 Forgive, just as Christ has forgiven you.
 Ephesians 4:31-32
- **5** God accepts you as his own. *Hebrews* 12:6
- 6 God is ALWAYS with you! Deuteronomy 31:6



Join us for Sunday services online at 11am on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/ bonfieldgpparish

"The Lord is coming, always coming. ... Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord."

—Henri Nouwen

* * *

"The good news of great joy changed the course of every silent night to come."

—Alicia Bruxvoort

* * *

"Christmas is a box of tree ornaments that have become part of the family."

—Charles M. Schulz

Fellowship Breakfast

Come enjoy a great breakfast and fellowship with other Parish members and community friends at IHOP in Bourbonnais on the first Tuesday of the month:

December 6 at 8:30am. The group orders from the regular menu.

If you would like to see the newsletter in color then check out our website at www.bonfieldgrandprairie.org and click on the newsletter tab at the top. If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please send an email to bonfieldgp@gmail.com.



Facebook www.facebook.com/
bonfieldgpparish
Website - www.
bonfieldgrandprairie.org



We are a Parish of 2 United Methodist churches: Bonfield Evangelical (Evan) UMC & Grand Prairie UMC. Our minister is Keith Blankenship. It is our goal to share God's love with the world

through our words and actions! We welcome you to visit us for Sunday service that works best for you and/or your family at the times listed.



Time For Church

Grand Prairie

At 12408 W Rt.17 Bonfield, IL 8:30 am Sunday Worship Services 9:45am Sunday School

Bonfield Evangelical

At 348 Smith St. Bonfield, IL 10:00 am Sunday Worship Service 8:30am Sunday School



Pastor Keith Blankenship's Information
Email: imredeemed59@gmail.com
Cell: (309) 830-0875
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 11AM - 3PM
& evenings upon request
Mailing Address: 225 Country Lane
Bonfield, IL 60913

Parish Office Information
Hope Raymond, Secretary
348 E. Smith St., PO Box 66 Bonfield, IL 60913
Phone: (815) 802-9805, please leave message
Email: bonfieldgp@gmail.com
Website: www.bonfieldgrandprairie.org
Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9AM - 1:30PM

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NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR

~ Advent Services: November 27 and December 4, 11, & 18