

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



When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (TLB)

We have made it to the beginning of the New Year! While 2023 was a wonderful year for some, others might not see it that way. However you have seen the year just now completed, I want to try and give you an idea on how to start this year.

The Scripture I share this month can be explained by looking at the verses just before it. Verses 14-16 tell us: Since we believe that Christ died for all of us, we should also believe that we have died to the old life we used to live. He died for all so that all who live—having received eternal life from him—might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them. So stop evaluating Christians by what the world thinks about them or by what they seem to be like on the outside. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, merely as a human being like myself. How differently I feel now!

There were times in my early adult years when I was an evaluator of others. More than once I felt like those who devoted their life to Jesus thought they were better than everyone else. I felt I was happy in my life of working, then going out to have a good time with friends. Anyone who tried to change what I was doing or would say that I was wasting away my life were not people I wanted to be around. My eyes were blind to what I was really doing to myself.

Fast forward to a little later in life. Some huge changes happened in my life and a seed was planted. It began with taking my kids to Sunday school as I was working on gaining permanent custody of them. There I developed friendships with people who started leading me closer to Jesus. Yes, the one who died for each of us to take away all of our sins! The story will continue on in another article soon.

The point I want to make right now is that no matter what you may have done that caused you to stray away or turn your back on Jesus, He will still give you a chance for a new beginning! If you are reading this and find yourself evaluating Christians, as the Scripture says, you still have time to turn to a new beginning! This first month of 2024 is an excellent time to do that.

So here is a way to make that fresh start: Open up a Bible and do a little bit of reading. If that isn't what you want to do, talk to a friend of yours who is a Christian. Maybe they can answer questions for you and help to plant a seed that will grow into a life with Jesus knowingly by your side. There are other ways you can take steps to become a new person inside. Reach out to me and I am willing to help those in need.

May 2024 be the best year for each one of you!

Pastor Keith

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Happy New Year Happy New Year Happy New Year

Salina Fireman's Breakfast

1st Sunday of every month -
January 7, February 4, & March 3

ALL YOU CAN EAT

Breakfast at the station

from 8am - 11:30am.

Adult all you can eat plates \$12 &

Kids prices \$8



Biscuits & Gravy, Eggs, Bacon, Sausage, Pancakes,
French Toast, Toast, OJ, milk, & coffee.

And as always - It's the BEST breakfast in town!

The heart of our faith

Christianity affirms that at the heart of reality is a Heart, a loving Father who works through history for the salvation of his children. Man cannot save himself, for man is not the measure of all things and

humanity is not God. Bound by the chains of his own sin and finiteness, man needs a Savior.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

**January Memory Verse**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17

Bible Quiz

In the book of Judges, the warrior Barak would go to battle only if a certain female leader went with him. Who was she?

- A. Rebekah
- B. Jael
- C. Michal
- D. Deborah



Answer: D (See Judges 4:1-10.)

Puzzle!

Use the grid to discover what James 5:13-18 advises when challenges loom.

	A	F	L	P	T
	C	H	N	R	W
	E	I	O	S	Y

P

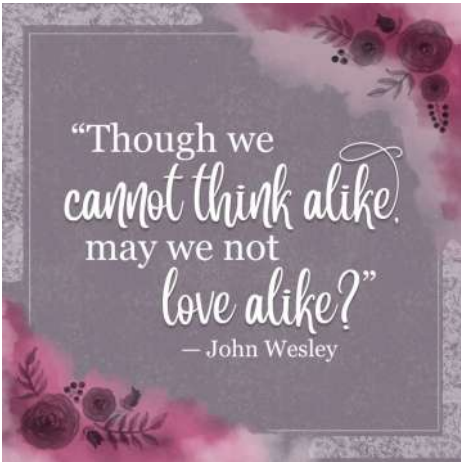
Answers: Pray in faith. Pray for each other. Pray earnestly.

A year that whispers Jesus

For author Nancy Tichy, a small holiday gift once sparked big-picture thoughts about Christian living. One December she received a kitchen towel with the message “I want a Christmas that whispers JESUS.” That prompted thoughts of what it’s like to have an entire year that whispers Jesus.

For starters, that involves daily quiet time, devotion and prayer. “Sometimes I wake with the thought of a person on my mind,” writes Tichy. “I’m quiet with this impression, interceding for the family member or friend until it has lifted. Could this be a whisper from our Savior?”

Many other daily occurrences are “worthy of [Jesus’] whispered response of love,” Tichy points out. That’s true whether we’re distracted by tasks and troubling thoughts or buoyed by encounters with contentment and joy. “For me,” she writes, “whispering is part of intimacy, and that is what I want to make a hallmark of the coming year. I want closeness with our Savior that enables me to hear from him, even when he whispers.”



Thank you to everyone who sent me a card and gave me a gift for Christmas!

~ Pastor Keith

Changing the calendar each January is a reminder that God makes all things new.

Directions: Use the clues and the calendar code to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV.

JANUARY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	God	night	word	in	love	Jesus
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
glory	therefore	speak	give	light	Christ	a
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
saw	beginning	anyone	waters	help	is	many
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
he	again	through	earth	made	while	back
28	29	30	31			
new	if	and	creation			

The second Monday _____

The last Monday __

The 16th _____

One day before the 20th __

The day before the first Friday __

The last weekday of the second week _____

The day after the 20th __

The day after 18th __

The first day of the second weekend __

The last Sunday __

The last day of the month _____

Answers: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.



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

From Our Church Bulletin: The Maxwell & Nichols' Family, the Soltysik Family, Candy Bauer, Mel Brinkman, Jay Buente, Ron Cordes, Benny Cruse, Donna Diefenbach, Virginia Dittus, Herb Foltz, Rick Gaffield, Vickie Gaffield, Marjorie Kersch, Allen Messer, Marilyn Ohrt, Dave Parks, Harry & Sharon Pfeiffer, Sunshine Powell, Dorothy Riegel, Stan Stone, Marion Wenzelman, Stan Wenzelman, & Ronald Wildman.

Arden Courts

Mel Brinkman

Courtyard Estate of Herscher

Marjorie Kersch
Randy Riegel
Ralph Grob

At College

Jenna Kenning
Isabell Lowey
Kamden Lockwood

Heritage Woods

Vi Morse

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 at 815-802-9805 or bonfieldgp@gmail.com.



Predictions for the new year

Author Ronald Wilson, in *Stretching the Soul*, describes being certain that four things will occur in the days ahead.

- Trouble will come. Life is difficult. I must mourn as well as dance.
- In this long journey [of life], I'm not in control. God has reminded us of this.
- Many times I will fail.
- I will find forgiveness and get up and go on. God will wipe up the mess I've made of things, take me by the hand and set me back on the right path.

Praise God for his sure presence during the joys and challenges the new year brings!



+Christian Symbol+

LATIN CROSS — The Latin cross is the simplest and most common form of the Christian cross, possibly dating from the second or third century. Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians typically display a crucifix — an image of Jesus hanging on the cross — to remember his death for the sake of the world. Protestant churches often favor the empty cross, commemorating Jesus' resurrection.



NOVEMBER 2023 ATTENDANCE

	11/5	11/12	11/19	11/26
Evangelical	30	31	37	30
Grand Prairie	20	25	24	18
Total	50	56	61	48



United
Women
in Faith

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.

Martha Circle - Grand Prairie UMC – Women of Faith (Martha Circle) Meeting, December 13, 2023

The Grand Prairie United Women of Faith meeting was held on December 13, at the home of Tricia Coffman. There were 13 members present. Tricia opened the meeting with devotion at 6:00 PM, followed by a very tasty meal. The Secretary and Treasurer reports were given, and approved as read. Collecting items throughout the year for Operation Christmas Child was a huge success. This will continue in 2024. We will also collect throughout the year for Midwest Mission supply kits.

The offering at Grand Prairie Christmas program was over \$200 and sent to Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

NEW BUSINESS

Pastor had received a call from Deborah Dodt, director of ACOM reaching out to local churches for donations throughout the year. ACOM is a nonprofit corporation which began in 2013 and provides emergency assistance, information and referral, and case management in response to local needs. The program is operated out of the Asbury United Methodist Church, Kankakee. ACOM operates an interfaith Kids Closet, the Merchant Street food pantry, transitional housing assistance, as well as emergency assistance such as work clothes for job applicants, prescriptions, obtaining birth certificates. One item that is used quickly is diapers.

The Parish NOW committee has designated the 5th Sunday of the month in 2024 as diaper collection Sunday.

WOF 2024 Meeting dates and hostess were discussed:

- January 10 – Cindy Erdmann & Trish DeLucas
- March 13 – Cheri Dayton & Rita Overacker
- May 8 – Meet at restaurant
- July 10 – Becky Cruse
- September 11 – Jenny Cochran & Joyce Cochran
- November 13 – Tricia Coffman
- December 11 – Kim Ohrt & Marilyn Ohrt

Our next meeting is January 10; hostess will be Cindy and Trish.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM, with a closing prayer from Pastor. Members then wrapped gifts for seniors for the Share the Warmth program.

Cindy Erdmann, Secretary



The United Women of Faith from the Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church hosted a group lunch on December 14th at the Herscher Restaurant for their 'Christ'mas celebration. There was a record attendance of 21 there this year! We all enjoyed some great food and fellowship...so good that sadly NONE of us thought to take any photos! There were 9 men and 12 women making up our group. Before we went our separate ways, we all joined our voices in a rousing chorus of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" led by Bart Durbin. Below is a picture of some of the people that attended.



Making the most of ordinary time

In liturgical churches, more than half of the church-year calendar is labeled as Ordinary Time. Although that merely means the weeks are designated by ordinal numbers (*First Sunday after the Epiphany*, etc.), people may assume that "ordinary" means not special, or not a church holiday.

Ordinary gets a bad rap, but it represents the bulk of daily life. Not all days contain mountaintop experiences that warrant Facebook posts. Yet "simple, consistent, sometimes boring faithfulness" can lead to out-of-the-ordinary results, according to blogger Karl Vaters. "When you're following God's will for your life and you string a bunch of ordinary but necessary actions together, extraordinary things can happen," he writes at ChristianityToday.com.

Likewise, although Christians may strive to be radical, out-of-the-ordinary followers of Jesus, everyday discipleship leaves a powerful legacy. In *The Ordinary Christian Life*, pastor Michael Horton extols the value of "the regular preaching of Christ from all of the Scriptures, baptism, the Supper, the prayers of confession and praise, and all of the other aspects of ordinary Christian fellowship." He says the result of participating in "the ordinary life of the covenant community" is quite extraordinary: "steady maturation in Christ."

—adapted from *The Wired Word*



Thank you everyone for the calendars and cards that were collected for the veterans. We collected over 210 calendars and cards, enough to give each veteran at the Manton Veterans Home. We will be meeting on Saturday, January 13th at 9am at Evan in the upper room to sign Valentines Day cards for the veterans. All are welcome to come and help with the Valentines Day!

One Hooky Day a Year

On a random Saturday, I threw the to-do list out the window, packed up the kids and headed to the mountains. Because Saturdays are usually for catching up on chores, my sons were surprised by their new, carefree mom. We played, laughed and explored — all with no agenda. I introduced them to the concept of a hooky day.

As a child, my parents allowed me one of those per year. It wasn't a sick day but a day off, just because. I could take it any time (but not to avoid a test), and I didn't need to plan ahead. It was okay to wake up one morning and play hooky.

Proverbs 17:22 (NKJV) wisely states, "A merry heart does good, like medicine." What will you do with an impromptu day off? Will you set your own pace walking through a park? Maybe stop at a restaurant you've wanted to try? Whether a fun day off includes spending time alone or with a friend, make the most of it as a God-given gift. —Janna Firestone

Our Source of Light

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, when the wise men (who were Gentiles) came to worship Jesus and bring him gifts. During the church-year season of Epiphany, we remember that God's Son is the Light of the whole world.

Ponder the gifts of Epiphany with these two reflections, written centuries apart:

Your light, dear God, surpasses all other light, because all light comes from you. Your fire surpasses all fire, because your fire alone burns without destroying. The flames of your fire reach into the soul, consuming the sin and selfishness that lie there. But far from damaging the soul, your fire sets it ablaze with love. What moved you to enlighten me with your truth? The fire of your love was the reason. You loved me so much that you could not bear to see me confused and perplexed. Can I ever repay the burning love which you have given me? No, because I have nothing of my own to give. Yet you assure me that the love which you put into my soul is repayment enough. You desire only the joy of seeing me receiving your gift. What more perfect Father could there be! —Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)

Epiphany beckons us to come to the light of Jesus Christ. Epiphany calls us to stare into that light until our inner darkness is fully expunged. Epiphany then sends us out into a dark and weary world as women and men with shining faces, until we say with the apostle Paul, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [see 2 Corinthians 4:6]. —Jason Gaboury

Start the New Year Off Right!

Join Us in Church Sunday, December 31 on
New Years Eve:
Grand Prairie at 8:30 am & Evan at 10am!



Resolve to Go Micro

Most New Year's resolutions are so major they seem made to be broken. Maybe that's why "micro-resolution" is the latest January buzzword. Setting smaller goals is more realistic and helps ensure follow-through, according to experts. People who try setting micro-resolutions say that approach is more positive and leads to longer-lasting change. For example, instead of attempting to lose 30 pounds this year, make a micro-resolution to walk 10 minutes twice per day and to snack on fresh fruit at least once a day.

Micro-resolutions can also be helpful in matters of faith. If aiming to read the entire Bible in one year feels overwhelming, take five minutes each morning and evening to read a brief devotional or pray. If joining your church's missions committee isn't possible, try to talk to one new person each week about your faith or church. May God bless you as you take small steps that add up to big impact this year!



Two Ships

The year like a ship in the distance
comes over life's mystical sea.
We know not what change of existence
'tis bringing to you or to me.
But we wave out the ship that is leaving
and we welcome the ship coming in,
although it be loaded with grieving,
with trouble, or losses, or sin. ...

The new ship comes nearer and nearer,
we know not what freight she may hold.
Hope stands at the helm there to steer her;
our hearts are courageous and bold.
Sail in with new joys and new sorrows.
Sail in with new banners unfurled.
Sail in with unwritten tomorrows.
Sail in with new tasks for the world.

—from "New Year," Ella Wheeler Wilcox



Three Powerful Prayers

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951), an Irish Protestant missionary, served in India for 55 years. Much of her work was with children, especially rescuing them from sexual slavery. Carmichael wrote 35 books and many articles about her mission work. The Church of England remembers her on January 18, the anniversary of her death.

The following brief but powerful prayers are attributed to Carmichael:

- May thy grace, O Lord, make that possible to me which seems impossible to me by nature.
- Holy Spirit, think through me, till your ideas are my ideas.

God, hold us to that which drew us first, when the cross was the attraction, and we wanted nothing else.



January 1 Kevan Wilson, Tina Pfeiffer, Mary Charter
 January 2 Carla Taylor, Dale Pfeiffer, Lindsey Rice
 January 3 Julia Fecke, Ed Diefenbach, Kim Ohrt
 January 4 Wesley Pastorel, Troy Wilson, Lesley Dato
 January 5 Ronald Wildman
 January 6 Jacob Grob, Dan Riegel
 January 7 Jacob Mau, Alan Rieke, Cindy Melhorn
 January 8 Paul Larkins, Michael Weber
 January 9 Rachael (Frieze) Tracy
 January 11 Jim Diefenbach, Chad Sullivan,
 Matthew Goodman
 January 12 Elizabeth Meyer, Scott Bland,
 Stacey Bland, Michelle Hertz
 January 13 Cade Turro, Anthony Hawks
 January 14 Terry Goodman, Jeanne Dau, Bob Scholl,
 Jenny Jensen
 January 15 Tommy Lee Davis
 January 16 Shawna Havener, Hope Raymond
 January 17 Robert Buente, Valerie Evans,
 David Dayton
 January 18 Lori Brinkman
 January 19 Jeremy Riegel, Kathy Dahn, Adam Weber,
 Morgan Norton,
 January 20 Gavin Milk, Scott Peters, Wayne Meyer,
 Linda Wagner
 January 21 Amy Meyer
 January 22 Alison Adams, Cyndee Meyer
 January 23 Jason Dahn, Rick Hoffman
 January 24 Grant Wenzelman
 January 25 Abigail (Pfeiffer) Allen
 January 26 Ian Charter, Matt Ward, Judy Bushman,
 Marie Brunner, Linda Lindley,
 Melissa Denoyer
 January 27 Gerrick Weedon, Kamden Lockwood
 January 28 Andrew Pfeiffer, David Sackett
 January 29 Dustin Kingsland, Timothy Messer
 January 30 Andrew Wulff

January 31 McKenzie Riley Paetsch,
 Alexis Graf, Gerald Frank Fecke, Jr.,
 Jason Kirk, Randy Riegel

Please notify the church office of any names and birthdays which need to be added, removed or corrected, 815-802-9805.



Join us for a
 Community 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 he is a member
 of Grand Prairie UMC.

Trust God.



JANUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 - NO Journey - Happy New Year!	2 - IHOP Fellowship Breakfast at 8:30AM	3	4	5	6
7 - Holy Communion - Salina Fire Breakfast - Epiphany Sunday - Baptism of the Lord	8 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	9 - Ad Board at Evan at 7pm	10	11	12	13
14 - Human Relations Sunday	15 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	16	17	18 - Week of Prayer (18-25)	19	20
21	22 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	23 - Newsletter Article Deadline 9AM	24	25 - Printing the Newsletter	26	27
28	29 - Journey Prayer Group at Evan at 10AM	30 - Fold Newsletters at Evan at 8AM	31	28	29	30

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace — only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."

—Anne Lamott

* * *

"Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."

—Carl Bard

* * *

"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward."

—Princess Diana

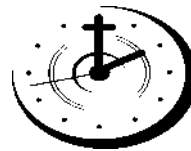
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"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer."

—Albert Camus



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

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:
January 2 at 8:30am.
The group orders from the regular menu and
pays for their own meals.



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.

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



Facebook -
[www.facebook.com/
bonfieldgpparish](https://www.facebook.com/bonfieldgpparish)
Website - [www.
bonfieldgrandprairie.org](http://www.bonfieldgrandprairie.org)

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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Bonfield, IL 60913

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Bonfield, IL 60913



On Sunday, December 17th we had a wonderful Children's Christmas Program at Evan about God's Gifts.

A Big Thank you to Kim Metzka for being the person behind all the hard work to put together the program. Thank you to all the children for performing and their parents for helping.

Thank you to all those who brought 10+ different soups for the hot dog & soup potluck. There was a variety of yummy desserts, including a birthday cake for Jesus. Good fellowship & good food!