



**Open Doors**

# **United Methodist Church of Blue Eye**

**Volume 14 Issue 1 FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025**

January is going by quite quickly and so it seems we will begin 2025 with a February/March newsletter. The year actually started with a church activity—a New Year's Eve get together that ended at 12:05 AM 2025!! We had a great time as our family from Missouri Valley, Iowa was here to help celebrate. Outside of that event we are kind of in rest mode. Because of the weather, we have not been doing much inside or outside. We have been able to worship on Sunday mornings and the ladies have been keeping up with their ministry. In fact, just this week quilts were taken to Pregnancy Life Line.

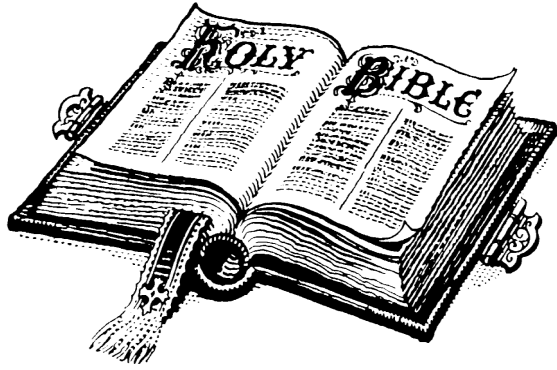
So, February is coming up and we will try to get back to some normal activities. January and February are kind of in between months (Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter). We will keep the decorations up until the last Sunday in February. I really enjoy the atmosphere the decorations create. It is a warm and beautiful sanctuary and I like keeping it festive as long as possible. We still have our tree up at home as we will go to Missouri Valley from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 to celebrate Christmas with our children and their families.

Peg enjoyed her time at "Jingle Bell Junction" so she applied for a full time job the 2025 season and will be working full time at "Christmas Hollow" which is a store that is open all year long. Another new item is that our home is up for sale. We need to consider moving to a place in Branson that is all on one level. We will either look for a 2 or 3 bedroom apartment. With that said, we will need to downsize quite a bit, as we really don't want to rent a storage unit if possible, but we do have a lot of stuff. As we begin to look at what to keep, sell or give away, it has become apparent we have too much and it goes back 25-30 years. So, keep us in your prayers as we decide what to do with it all!! At the moment it does seem like we will have some time to sort as the housing market in Branson has dropped off until the spring. That's alright as we didn't want to move during the winter. Also, since Peg got a full time job at Silver Dollar city, we will not be able to do the normal activity we were planning to do. We will be gone the first Sunday in February but will not take all the six Sundays left. Maybe one or two Sundays before July 1, but no long term trips away. We do thank you for the two months we did in Minnesota. It was a great time to be with family.

As we approach the end of June I will try to write a couple of newsletter articles to share any wisdom I might have for the transition to a new pastor. Those articles will probably be rather short. We have been through a lot in the last 14 years. One celebration we need to do in May is to celebrate 10 years in the now not so new Welcome Center/Office addition. I can't believe it's been 10 years since we opened the new addition in May 2015. Other than that we have our normal activities which include our spring garage sale. Another new event is that the Ministry House is in full time ministry as we have two fellows staying there full time. God always provides. Our insurance went up and this will help us pay that bill!!

It does seem that God wants us here at 6238 E State Hwy 86. He has a plan for the congregation. It does not matter our size in numbers, but our size in faith. Faith is shown by HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE and this church has a lot of that to share. I am thankful to be a part of that ministry. May God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit always be the reason for any season!!!!

*Pastor Jack*



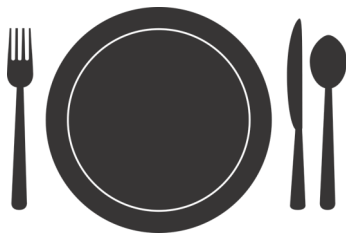
## Bible Study Resumes

We are offering a five week study that we started in December as an Advent Study, but due to many obstacles, we were not able to continue. We will have the following study sessions:

Jan. 27	Session 1 and Prayer Time
Feb 3	Pastor out of Town
Feb 10	Session 2
Feb 17	Session 3
Feb 24	Session 4
March 3	Session 5 and Prayer Time

Depending on participation we may consider doing a Lenten Study as well. Bible Study and Prayer are the foundation stones of the church. We have gotten away from that a little bit so you are encouraged to schedule these Monday sessions. We are a stronger church when we offer these ministries and when we respond to these ministries.

## Fellowship Gatherings in April



The weekly Wednesday lunches and card playing will start again in April. Stay tuned for the new schedule!

L.E.O.T.A. (Let's Eat Out Together, Amen) gatherings will also resume in April. Get ready to try some new or favorite restaurants as a group.

## Women's & Men's Ministries

The women's group continues to work on Monday afternoons making quilts that they donate to nursing home residents with the following message:



*"May God's Grace be upon this quilt. . . warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing.*

*May this mantle be a safe haven. . . a sacred place of security and well-being; sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the one who receives this quilt be cradled in hope, kept in joy, Graced with peace and wrapped in love."*

The women also have a greeting card ministry.

The men meet on Mondays to deal with maintenance issues that face the church. There will also be a need this spring for both groups to get together for a "Spring Cleaning and Sprucing Up" of items inside and outside. We will try to schedule these in between our major ministry in the spring which is our Garage Sale! Thank you for working in these ministries.

Everyone is welcome. Meeting time is 1:00 on Monday.



Peg and I again want to "Thank You!" for remembering us at Christmas with a special gift. Actually we are starting a "retirement fund" and this gift will be the start of that fund. The money in that fund will allow us to journey with our fifth wheel in our retirement, Thank you so much!!



## Ministries Appreciated

During the Christmas season we sponsored two ministries. We collected toys and gifts for children and youth in Stone County. That ministry helped families of Stone County have a Merry Christmas. Our church was able to provide over \$1,000.00 of gifts. Stone County was very appreciative of our gifts.

Our second ministry was Bibles for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Again, because of your generosity, we were able to send them \$1,000.00 for the purchase of Bibles. Thank you so much for supporting these ministries.



## Spring Garage Sale Scheduled

Our spring garage sale is scheduled for April 17, 18 and 19. More details will be coming as we get closer to that date but it is the usual three-day sale, so we need to start looking for spring items to donate to the sale. Items have already started to come in. God always seems to provide a new group of items for us to offer our community. Please stay tuned for further details!

## The Un-Decoration

The Un-Decoration of the church sanctuary is set for the last Sunday in February which is the 23rd. We will combine a potluck after church with un-decorating and celebrate the end of the month, as well as the end of a season, together.

Our church is so warm and beautiful for the Advent/Christmas season that it is hard to take it down, but with Lent/Easter around the corner, we'll need to do that on Sunday, February 23rd!!



## Ash Wednesday Kicks Off Lent/Easter Season

Ash Wednesday is March 5 this year. We will have a service at 7:00 PM that evening to kick off the Easter Season. Following that will be Palm Sunday on April 13th, Maundy Thursday on April 17th and Easter on April 20th.

We will have Communion on Maundy Thursday at 7:00 PM and Easter Sunrise Service at 8:30 AM on April 20, followed by an Easter breakfast at 9:30 AM and Easter Service at 10:30 AM.

March and April will be busy with Lent/Easter activities and ministries!

# Church Financial Update

We were able to finish out the year in better shape than we expected. We paid all bills including Apportionments and Salaries. We ended the year with a balance of \$4,422.71, so we start 2025 in better shape than January 2024's starting balance of \$1,164.01.

We are trying to cut back on some expenses to help the budget. We also have long term tenants in the Ministry House. The money we get

## New Bank Name

First Community Bank merged with Table Rock Community Bank to become TRCB. None of our accounts were changed so we just have a new name for our bank.

## Giving for 2024

Dave Gilliam is the financial secretary. He would have the numbers for you as to what you gave last year. Thank you for your giving!!!

## A Note of Thanks

Thanks to Lucy Wang who has been keeping the bulletins coming, along with the power points. Also to Lori Johnson who has been doing the newsletter for us since Susan Winston moved to Kansas. Also, Lori will be helping Pastor put together a new directory. If you have changes to address, phone numbers or email, please let Lori know within the next couple of weeks. We would like the new directory out by April. Thanks!

from that ministry will be used to pay our insurance. As many of you know, insurance has gone up from \$9,000.00 last year to \$16,000.00 this year. God has provided a new ministry which in turn helps us to pay the larger premiums. Also, the garage sales will help us pay our loan payment until at least July. We have a number of different ministries under the Building Fund. These include the following:

- 1) Mortgage Fund has \$5,534.84 of which we pay \$450.00 per month. Our loan has a balance of \$31,648.48.
- 2) Women's Ministry has \$381.00
- 3) Building Repairs has \$1,244.59
- 4) Ministry House Reserves for needed repairs has \$2,840.92
- 5) Ministry House Tenants Fund (we will have regular income here) has \$600.00
- 6) General Fund Reserve for future needs has \$7,327.37
- 7) Special Giving Fund has \$6,135.00
- 8) Special Memorials Fund has \$4,030.00

The Building Fund has a total of \$23,094.32.

God has watched over our giving and because of HIS love, care, and guidance, we have been able to do pretty well as a small congregation. THANK YOU! It's your donations and gifts that make our ministry happen.