

February Messenger 2026

First United Methodist Church of East Peoria

154 E. Washington Street, East Peoria, IL 61611

Phone 309-699-5417

Visit Us Online at www.epfumc.com

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♥ Loving God ♥ Loving Others ♥ Living Our Faith

Invite-Attend-Fellowship-Serve



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From the Pastor's Heart



Dear Church Family:

Grace and Love are two of the most important words in the Christian vocabulary. They also have been used in a judgmental and excluding way. Grace is something that we cannot earn. Grace is the opposite of karma which is all about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely, the peace of God given to the restless, the unmerited favor of God. Too often in the church we are given standards and, if we fall short, you are judged a failure. But I also notice most church people want God to give them grace even though they won't give another human grace.

Love is the same. We are always glad to pick out people who we say God doesn't love. We even come up with the Bible verses to prove our point. The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' time also did that. Then Jesus said "For God so loved the world...", no ifs, ands, or buts. Everyone can receive God's love. The church I grew up in excluded so many people, and as a child who was often excluded, I thought the God who loves me doesn't exclude but includes all. I am so glad when another Christian shows me grace and love and I am even happier when I get the chance to show grace and love to others.

God loves you and so do I,

Reverend Ted A.

Dixieland Worship

I have always wanted to do a Dixieland (New Orleans) Worship Service. I used to attend a Presbyterian Summer Service in Michigan that followed a Dixieland format. It was so much fun. The service is March 1 and will be divided into 2 parts. The first 30 minutes will be a regular Worship Service. The 2nd half hour will be the Peoria Pops Dixie Band playing Dixie favorites.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

The Men's Prayer Breakfast meets on the second Saturday each month at 8:00 am at the 520 Café in East Peoria. This month it is on February 14. Please let Chuck Pierman know if you will be attending.

February Sermons

Feb. 1: "Attend and Fellowship"

Luke 4:16, Acts 2:42-47 Rev. Ted A.

Feb 8: "Called to Serve"

Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 4:10-11

Mark 1:9-11 Rev. Ted A.

Feb. 15: Guest Speaker

Rev. Keith Anderson, Director

Preacher's Aid Society

Feb. 22: "Words That Changed the World"

Sermon Series "The Message of

Jesus" Rev. Ted A.

February Mission Offering

Our Mission Offering for February will not be a loose change offering. Instead we will collect items for the Food Pantry. We will announce every week what the items will be.

Feb. 1: Mac & Cheese, Peanut Butter

Feb 8: Cans of soup for Souper Bowl Sunday

Feb. 15: Cans of Corn & Green Beans

Feb. 22: Canned Fruit

Coming Events

Feb. 8: Souper Bowl Sunday Goal: 100 cans

Feb. 18: Ash Wednesday Services

Noon and 6:00pm

Mar. 29: Palm Sunday 9:00am

Apr. 2: Maundy Thursday

Apr. 3: Good Friday

Apr. 5: Easter Sunday 9:00am

HELP NEEDED!!!

If we don't get enough volunteers, we will have to stop having Children's Church. Let's keep this wonderful service going. There must be at least 2 volunteers at every Children's Church on Sunday. All the materials are ready for you, you just have to show up. Please, please sign up on the sheet in the foyer. This is a huge need as Britney and Cindy cannot be here every week. Please sign up!

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is February 18. We will have two opportunities to receive ashes and Holy Communion. The first service will be in the Chapel at noon and will last 30 minutes. The second service will be at 6:00pm in the Sanctuary and will last 45 minutes. Please join us for one of our Ash Wednesday Services.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday Service will be on April 5 at 9:00am. Our Bell Choir and our Adult Vocal Choir will provide the music. Friends for Mission will be serving their wonderful breakfast before and after the Worship Service. The cost is just a free will donation to Friends for Mission.

Supper Parties with Jesus

Starting on February 22, the first Sunday of Lent, and each Sunday until March 22 at 5:00pm, we will have a party with Jesus. It will consist of a simple meal of soup, bread, and dessert followed by a drama and a celebrative time of God's blessings. The drama is the Trial of Judas. Did God forgive or condemn Judas? You will be the jury. The Worship & Fellowship team believes this will be a fun fellowship and learning time.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Our Souper Bowl Sunday will be February 8, same as the NFL's Super Bowl. We need you to bring cans of soup that day for the Food Pantry. People have been assigned to a team. The list is on page 8. Please call the church if you don't see your name. Who's going to win the Super Bowl? Will it be the Patriots or the Seahawks? Which team will collect the most cans of soup? No matter which football team wins, let's set a goal of 100 cans. Can we beat that goal?

4Q 2025 Finance

General Fund

Used to pay our monthly expenses

Offerings: \$51,379.60

Expenses: \$54,825.79

Sympathies

Alan Astle passed away on January 16. Our deepest sympathies go out to the entire Astle family on their loss. Please keep Rosie and her family in your prayers.

We would like to express our sincere condolences to the Stachnik family on the loss of Ken who passed away on January 13. Be sure to include Jeanne and family in your prayers.

Reporting a New Address

Have you moved? Please call the office at 309-699-5417 and let us know your new address.

New Address

Betty Fugitt
1000 Centennial Dr. Apt. 48
East Peoria, IL 61611
309-472-2809

If you are ever in the Hospital

We call the hospitals every morning, but even if you specify that we be informed of your hospitalization, we are not always told. **Please call us** or have a relative or friend notify the Church. We want to know when you are ill so we can be praying for you.

Outreach Giving

Thanks to your 2025 giving our Outreach Missions Committee was able to donate to several deserving charities again this year.

Friends for Missions
UMCOR Disaster Relief
East Peoria Food Pantry
Midwest Food Bank - Peoria
South Side Mission
Pathway Ministries
UMC Special Sundays
SnackPac
Baby Fold

2025 Contribution Statements

2025 Contribution Statements have been mailed. If you did not get your statement and need one, please call the Church Office at 309-699-5417.

Giving Tree Thank You's

With all our thanks, We want you to know that we're grateful for your kind and considerate way. And we thank you for being so special. It means more than we could ever say. Our family is truly grateful for the gifts we received this Christmas. Thank you for blessing us this holiday season.

The L. Family

Thank you! This Christmas reminded us that kindness still shines BRIGHTLY. Thank you for being a light to our family when we needed it most.

The J. Family

Thank You for your loving heart and your helping hands. Thank you for helping our family have a joyful Christmas this year. It would not have happened without all of your kindness. Forever thankful.

The W. Family

Thank You. We are so thankful for the love and support you gave our family this Christmas. Your generosity meant more than you could ever know!

The M. Family

Life Line Screening®

March 20th here at the church. Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings. The screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection. There are flyers on the table in the Foyer with all the information and how to book your appointment.

Sunday Worship Services

Are you unable to attend our Sunday Worship Service in person but would love to be able to watch it every week? Did you attend and would like to see it again?

Our weekly Worship Service is broadcast live to our Facebook page and remains there even after the Worship Service ends. The service is also available on YouTube and our website. If you have any questions about how to access these various platforms, please contact the Church office.

REFRESH Service

Every Wednesday at noon our Church has a 30 minute service for you to Refresh yourself for the week. This Worship service has devotion, prayer and communion. This is a great opportunity to get you through to Sunday.

Giving Made Easy

Did you know you can setup your giving to be an automatic withdrawal, either monthly or semi-monthly? Withdrawals occur on the 3rd and/or the 17th each month. Sign-up is easy! Stop by the church office and ask for an Electronic Giving form.

One Call Communication System

One Call is a software we use to communicate Church information to our parishioners. If you do not currently receive Church messages, but would like to, please let the Office know. You can receive by email, text message or phone call.

PASTOR TED A.'s NEW OFFICE HOURS

In Office:

Monday: 9:00 am to 1:30 pm
Tuesday: 9:00 am to 11:00 am
Wednesday: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00 am to 11:00 am
Friday: Day Off

Afternoons during the week will be for visiting and evangelism. I hope you will give these new hours a chance. My main goal is to be a more effective pastor for East Peoria First UMC.

Your Church Staff

Rev. Ted A. Hartley, Directing Pastor
 Cell: 217-330-0708

Office Manager
 e-mail: office@epfumc.org

Ryan Klaus, Pianist/Organist

Bob Dietrich, A/V Coordinator

Easter Tulips

Help make our Communion Rail full of color on Easter Sunday by ordering Easter tulips. They will add a touch of beauty to our Sanctuary. We will be taking orders before and after Worship on February 15 & 22. You can also order the tulips by completing this order form and returning it to the Church Office. Cost is \$16. You will be able to take your tulips home with you after the Easter Sunday Worship Service.

Your NAME: _____

Memory/Honor of: _____

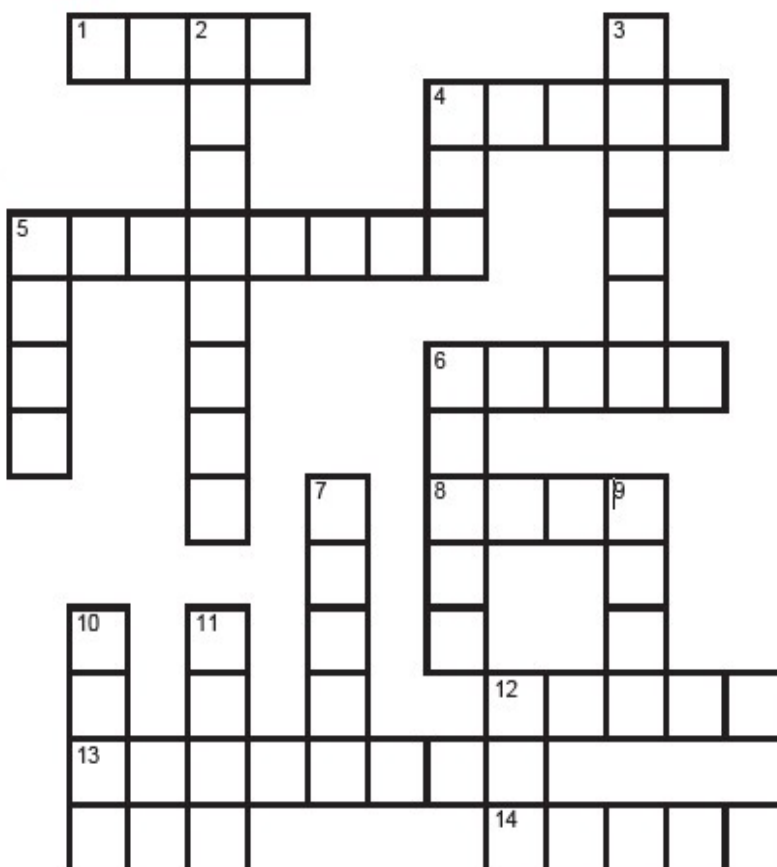


Page for kids of all ages

Be My Valentine

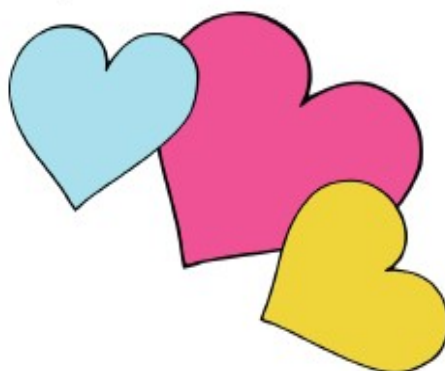
Across

1. A special item given to show love and appreciation.
4. A symbol commonly associated with love and emotion.
5. The act of pursuing someone romantically.
6. Sweet treats that come in various flavors and shapes.
8. A color often associated with love and romance.
12. Beautiful and fragrant plants often associated with love.
13. A container for sending a special message or gift.
14. Symbolic birds representing love and peace.



Down

2. The month that celebrates love and Valentine's Day.
3. A close companion with whom one shares affection and trust.
4. A gesture of affection where two people embrace tightly.
5. A small piece of paper with a heartfelt message.
6. The Roman god of love, often depicted with bow and arrow.
7. A heavenly being often depicted with wings and a halo.
9. A gentle touch of lips as a sign of affection.
10. A heartfelt piece of writing expressing emotions.
11. A feeling of deep affection and care.
12. A vibrant color symbolizing love and passion.



Angel
Candy
Card
Courting
Cupid
Doves
Envelope
February
Friend
Gift
Heart
Hug
Kiss
Love
Pink
Poem
Red
Roses



In Our Prayers

In the Hospital in the Past Month

Nancy Cheatham, Barb Son

Fighting Cancer

Halle Bloom, Julie Jenkins,
Pam Riley, Mark Gill,
Mary Mallory, Lynne Barker,
Brian Engles, Rob Calder II,
Katie Bishop, Sandy Crawford,
Joette Blakesley, Gary Fargher,
Merry Eccles, Nancy Brooks,
Norman Clark (asbestosis),
Len Brockman, Kellen Norman,
Sandra Begemen,
Byron Webb

Prolonged Illness / Challenges

Margaret Johnston, Beth Ball,
Rev. Stan Haxton, Bonnie Lourash,
Margaret Sides, Jeff Briggs, Roger Williams,
Les Leach, Jodi Cassady
Austin Aldag, Earl Webb,
Caitlin Reeves, Nancy Riddle

Long Term Care / Assisted Living

Anna Martin, Joyce Mooberry,
Lynda Gustafson, Betty Fugitt, Jean Aldag

Needing Prayer

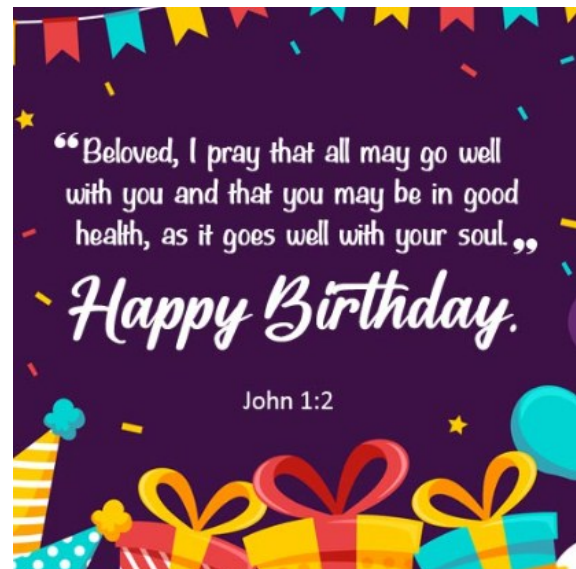
Please pray for Our Dear Church Family
who are struggling, the lonely, all who are
unemployed, shut-in, those who are
struggling with flu/colds, those who are
grieving, all governmental leaders,
those who are serving in our military,
the youth and all caregivers.

Military Service Members

Joe Rizzo (Air National Guard),
Ryan Webb (Army),
Jared Koch (Air Force),
Nate Hill (Air National Guard)

February Birthdays

Feb 4	Bonnie Lourash
Feb 6	Joann Hibser
Feb 9	Randy Leu
Feb 10	Garrett Son
Feb 16	Les Leach
Feb 18	Cindy Waremburg
Feb 21	Reid Johnson
Feb 22	Randy Mooberry
Feb 24	JR Vogel
Feb 25	Terry Newlan
Feb 26	Faye Pierman
Feb 27	Bud Elward
Feb 27	Tyler Hoskins
Feb 28	Timothy Bond



Is this your birth month?

If you have a birthday this month, and your name is missing from our list, we do not have your birthdate in our database. Please provide the office with your birthdate; month, day and year. We want to celebrate you!

Assigned Souper Bowl Teams

New England Patriots

Bill & Laurie Allison
Bev Avery
Jeff & Nancy Brooks
Sandy Crawford
Bob & Shelly Dietrich
Ron Edwards
Steve & Becky Emerson
Betty Fugitt
Linda Gren
Rev. Ted A. Hartley
Jean Hobbs & Bill Marks
Evelyn Howard
Sam Knowlton
Joan LaConte
Randy Leu
Chad & Ilva McBrayer
Bill Mehrhoff
Jerry & Patsy Moore
Orin & Kathy Naramore
Chuck & Faye Pierman
Karen Rees
Bob & Nancy Riddle
Rose Rock
Margaret Sides
Forrest Smith
Dan & Barb Son
Patti Staley
James Taft
Dee Tucker
Jim Vogel
Cindy Waremburg
Britney Willhite
Sharon Kinsman
Tammy Traywick



Seattle Seahawks

Scott Allison
Scott Bundy
Pat & Jodi Cassady
Chad & Kindra Cunningham
Melissa Earle
Becky Ellis
Jim Frey
Linda Gerber-Woodard
Jenny Gwinn
Bill & Lynn Heisel
Steve & Susie Hoskins
Marlene & Ryan Klaus
Janet Koch
Ashleigh Lane
Heather & Emily Cassady-Goad
Bill McLean
Paul & Peggy Mooney
Phil & Stacey Munoz
Ed & Terry Newlan
Nick & Julie Powers
Jennie Reeves
Di Robbins & Tisha Thelen
Lucy Roesse
Dean Smith
Vi Smith
Malcolm Staley
Mary Starr
Karen Trumpy
Sondra Urban
Mike Waldron
Byron & Jamie Webb
Roger & Leta Williams
Chris Hartley Tapp &
Chelsea Parker

