

September Messenger 2026

First United Methodist Church of East Peoria

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Visit Us Online at www.epfumc.com

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🍏 *Loving God* 🍏 *Loving Others* 🍏 *Living Our Faith* 🍏

Invite - Attend - Fellowship - Serve



In This Issue:

- 2.....Pastor's Heart
- 3Mission & Impact/Upcoming Events
- 4-5Upcoming Events & Announcements
- 5Fall Bible Study
- 6..... September Sermons /Leap of Faith Inspection/
SnackPac Challenge
- 7October: Fall into Outreach
- 8Page for Kids of All Ages
- 9Prayers & Birthday List
- 10.....Calendar
- 11.....Say Cheese!





from the pastor's heart

Dear Church Family,

Starting year two, I am feeling hopeful and I hope you are, too. Your friendly spirit has truly encouraged me. I wanted to share with you Pastor's Report for this year:

EPFUMC has the potential for a bright future, but we need all of us to make our church work. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, just as a human body has many different parts, like eyes, ears, hands, and feet, the church requires every single person's unique gifts to function.

There are many things to do, and many of those things do not require a college degree or any special training. We need greeters to welcome people on Sundays, especially visitors. We also need people to serve in Children's Church, Choir, Bell Choir, Shut-in Visitation, and as Office Angels. In the coming months, I will be reaching out to all of you who do not currently have a ministry to see how you can help.

I realize this Church has been through a lot in the last few years. There has been anger, distrust, tears, and doubt. I believe now, in 2026-2027, the church can begin to rebuild and continue to move forward. Below are some thoughts on how to move forward:

1. We must be intentional in inviting new people and contacting and encouraging members we haven't seen in a while.
2. **ALL** must take part. Everyone has a task they can do for the Lord. We cannot let a few bear the load for the many.
3. Give to support the church out of gratitude. Our financial support is crucial for this church to do ministry in East Peoria.
4. You may not all love and support the pastor, but I hope you do love this church. I hope that is why you stay. So, please give your best and don't hold back in giving back to this church.
5. Stay positive—DON'T GIVE UP. God is still on His throne. I promise you my best as I have promised God my best.

EAST PEORIA FIRST UMC, LET'S MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER!

With love and care,

Rev. Ted A.

September Mission Candle



Our 'noisy' offering for every Sunday in September will benefit Pathway Ministries (fka Peoria Rescue Mission). The mission of Pathway Ministries is to "create pathways out of poverty through Jesus with our neighbors in need."

Pathway follows a three-fold approach to working towards their mission. They help people in crisis by providing emergency shelter to both men and women. They assist people transform their lives through residential programs that help participants overcome life-choking barriers, such as of addiction, re-entry for ex-offenders, and lack of vital life and job skills. Finally, they help people transition, to lives of self-sufficiency and dignity through their Pathway Houses program. The Pathway team walks alongside graduates of their residential programs for up to three years, helping the participants develop a sustainable plan for financial and spiritual stability.

Pathway Ministries has been near and dear to the Naramore family for many years. Their family and friends have purchased and prepared meals for the men at Pathway since 2003. They have made treat bags for Valentine's Day, Easter baskets, and treat bags for Halloween. Each year on New Year's Eve, they make the men homemade pizzas. They really went out of their way for Christmas, making the men stockings packed with new gloves, hats, socks, hand warmers, snacks, toiletries, and a gift card for a local restaurant or for a bus pass.

Since they started, the number of men being served at any given time has increased from 60 to 90. The Naramores spend over \$500 for each meal they serve. Your financial support helps make this possible.

For more information about Pathway Ministries, see Kathy or Orin Naramore, or visit the Pathway website at pathwaypeoria.org.

Your Change Is Changing Lives!

Our "Noisy Offering" is a fun, hands-on way for everyone—especially children—to participate in giving. Each month, these gifts are shared with a different charity, helping us extend God's love beyond our walls and into our community. **In July, you raised \$179.60 for ROC House Ministries. In August, you collected hundreds of pounds of food for SnackPac.** Below are the organizations we will support in the months ahead.

Oct: The Baby Fold

Nov: Heifer Project

Dec: Helping Hands

Our office will be closed
Monday, September 7th,
in observance of

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity."
-Martin Luther King, Jr

First United Methodist Church
www.uemc.org

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's breakfast will be held on **September 12**.

Please contact Chuck Pierman to confirm your attendance.

Ladies' Luncheon

The next EPFUMC Ladies' Luncheon will be held on **September 19 at 11:30** at Avanti's in East Peoria.

We gather together on the 3rd Saturday of each month from April through November.

Contact Bev Avery for questions and/or to reserve your seat.

Worship Outside

Mark your calendars for our annual "Worship Outside" on Sunday, September 27, at 9:30am. Friends for Mission will serve donuts, juice, and water. (All free-will donations will gladly be accepted). Invite your family, friends, and neighbors, and grab your lawn chairs to share in this special time of worship and fellowship.

2027 Endowment Requests

Requests for Endowment funds for 2027 must be submitted by **October 1, 2026**. Request forms are available in black paper tray above the mail slots outside the office.

Contact Bev Avery at 309-657-0907 for questions.

2026 Endowment Reimbursements

If your ministry or project was approved for Endowment funding in 2026, receipts for approved purchases made this year must be submitted for reimbursement by **November 15, 2026**.

Reimbursement checks will be distributed in November and December 2026.

For questions, contact Bev Avery at 309-657-0907.

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 to request an Electronic Giving form.

2026 Charge Conference & Nominations

It's hard to believe that Charge Conference time is just around the corner. Current committee leaders should be on the lookout for an email from the office outlining required reports and submission deadlines. This is also the time for electing and reassigning church committee members and officers. If you are currently serving on a church committee as a member or an officer, please contact the office or Pastor Ted to discuss your willingness to continue serving. We also invite you to contact the office if you are interested in serving.

Worship ANYWHERE 24/7

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. Contact the church office for questions about how to access these various platforms.

REFRESH Service

Join us every Wednesday at noon for our half hour Refresh service. Open to all, come and bring a friend to worship with us through fellowship, devotion, prayer, and communion. What a great midweek pick-me-up to get you through from Sunday to Sunday!

HELP NEEDED!!!

Jesus said suffer not the little children. We need YOUR help to keep our Children's Church adequately staffed. For safety purposes, we must have two volunteers with the children each Sunday.

All the materials are ready for you. All you have to do is show up! Please consider signing up for a Sunday on the sheet in the foyer. Our children (and their parents) will thank you!!

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.

Church Communication System

OneCallNow is the notification system we use to communicate church information to our congregation. If you do not currently receive church messages, such as closures, reminders, etc., but would like to, please contact the office. You can be notified by email, text and/or phone call.

Lost & Found Items

Lost and found items are stored in the church office. Items that are not claimed within three months will be given away through the Food Pantry, donated, or thrown away.

Current Item:
Eddie Bauer Down Coat
(Navy Blue, Medium)

October Messenger Deadline

The deadline for the October 2026 issue of the Messenger is noon on **Monday, September 21**. Send your submissions to **office@epfumc.org** or drop them off in the church office.

Your Church Staff

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

Tia Fielder, Office Manager
e-mail: office@epfumc.org

Ryan Klaus, Pianist/Organist

Bob Dietrich, A/V Coordinator

Fall Bible Study

Andy Griffith & The Bible

What can Mayberry teach us about faith? Starting September 15, join us for the four-week Andy Griffith Bible Study. We'll explore selected episodes of The Andy Griffith Show alongside scripture, uncovering biblical themes of grace, compassion, honesty, and neighborly love.

All are welcome for this engaging and uplifting study. Classes will be offered twice a week, Wednesdays at 11:00am and Tuesdays at 6:00pm. No registration required. Can't make every session? Come when you can. Just come.

September 15-16

Episode: "High Noon in Mayberry"

Lesson: A Bad Case of Courage

Scripture: Psalm 23:4

September 22-23

Episode: "Barney's First Car"

Lesson: A Fork in the Road

Proverbs 14:29

September 29-30

Episode: "A Wife for Andy"

Lesson: A Very Busy Body

Proverbs 11:13

October 6-7

Episode: "The Great Filling Station Robbery"

Lesson: Concern for Discernment

Philippians 1:9-10

Church Office Hours

Monday—Friday 8:00 am—2:00 pm

Rev. Ted A. Hartley's Office Hours

Rev. Ted. A. is generally in the office
Monday through Thursday.

NOTE: His office hours fluctuate from week to week due to meetings and pastoral care duties. He is off on Fridays. Please call ahead to make an appointment or to make sure the Pastor is in.

September Sermons

Living the Vision Sermon Series

As we face the challenges of our time, the church is called to a renewed future—one that embraces love, service, and courageous leadership. This month, we will explore how the UMC's new vision statement is more than words. It provides a clear, Christ-centered framework for missional unity and collaboration across our worldwide connection. More importantly, it extends an invitation to each of us to embrace joy and hope as we live God's mission.

September 6:

"LOVE BOLDLY"

(Matthew 22:37-39 | John 13:34-35)

We passionately love God and, like Jesus, embrace and include people of every age, nation, race, gender, and walk of life.

Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

September 13:

"SERVE JOYFULLY"

(Psalm 100:1; Nehemiah 8:10; John 13:14-15; 1 Peter 4:10)

With the heart of Christ, we journey alongside the most vulnerable among us, offering care and compassion with joy.

Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

September 20:

"LEAD COURAGEOUSLY"

(Joshua 1:9 ; Ephesians 6:10)

Following Jesus' example, we seek to resist and dismantle all systems of evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

September 27:

Worship Outside

"Beyond These Walls: The Ministry of All Believers"
(Mark 16:15; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:9-10)

The ministry of the church was never meant to be confined by walls.

Speaker: Tia Fielder

Leap of HEALTH INSPECTION



LEAP OF FAITH GETS PERFECT SCORE!

In the August 16, 2026, issue of the Journal Star, Leap of Faith Learning Center was listed as having no Health Department violations!

Thank you to the LOF staff for maintaining our kitchen and food service processes so well and helping us earn this listing with other Tazewell County businesses.



SnackPac Challenge

Once again, the SnackPac challenge was a huge success. We even had a challenge to the challenge! Our normal

Cubs vs Cards challenge became a Cubs vs Cards vs SOX challenge!

It's too soon to tell who will get the bragging rights. The winner will be revealed in next month's issue.

Thank you to all who gave.

Because of you, we know the real winners are the kids in our community who won't go hungry this year!





Loving our neighbors requires us to be neighborly.
This October will be our opportunity to serve and connect with our community.
See the dates below and be sure to add them to your calendar:

OCTOBER 4:

Prayers for Pets Sunday

Help us celebrate our special bond with our animal companions while giving thanks to God for all creation. During the service, we will pray for the health, safety, and well-being of our furry friends. We will reflect on God's love for creation, and we will be reminded of our responsibility to care for animals and the world entrusted to us.

All pets, support and service animals, and their owners are invited to participate in this joyful and meaningful celebration. Register your pet for a special blessing on the sign-up sheet outside the sanctuary. Each animal will receive a treat, and each owner will receive a certificate (one per family).

OCTOBER 11

Friends & Family Sunday

If you ask a member of our church what brought them to EPFUMC, many will say someone invited them. It's an idea so crazy, it just might work!

On Sunday, October 11, invite a friend, a co-worker, a family member, or the cashier at the supermarket to join us for Friends & Family Sunday. Be sure to tell them breakfast will be served after the service, AND each friend will receive a special gift packet.

Special music: Bells and Harpist

Sermon: God & The Movies - Forrest Gump

OCTOBER 18

Baby Fold Sunday

On October 18, we will celebrate the meaningful mission work The Baby Fold. We will learn about the difference the program makes in the lives of children and families. We will also explore ways we can share God's love by supporting and encouraging vulnerable children and families in our community through adoption or foster parenting.

OCTOBER 25

Trunk or Treat

Bring your family, invite your friends, and enjoy an afternoon of laughter, fellowship, and fall fun! Our indoor Trunk-or-Treat is a safe, family-friendly event for kids of all ages! We will have games and activities and plenty of goodies along the way—even a special treat for parents! Costumes are welcome but completely optional. Join us in Ehrett Hall, 2pm to 4pm. Volunteers are needed to give out candy and help with games.

OCTOBER 14

Refresh Friends & Family Day

On October 14, invite a friend or family member to our Wednesday Refresh service. It's our hump day half hour of power! A light lunch will be served afterwards. Get praise and worship, a devotional message, prayer and communion, all in just 30 minutes! Service begins each week at noon.


Words to find:

PLAYGROUND
SCHOOL
BLACKBOARD
STUDENT
BELL
CLASSROOM
TEACHER
GRADE
READING
HOMEWORK
PENCIL
LESSON
WRITING
DESK
GLUE
SCIENCE
BOOKS
LUNCHBOX
PAPER
NOTEBOOK



Back to School Word Search



K	L	S	P	L	A	Y	G	R	O	U	N	D	P	U	C	O	P	C			
S	T	U	D	E	N	T	E	L	H	Z	M	Y	A	S	W	I	A	Z			
S	H															R	L	E	X		
I	S		V	K	B	E	L	L	R	U	C	P	L			I	H	R	C		
M	D		Z	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	Q	Y	G			T	O	Y	L		
I	G		Y	I									E	Z		I	D	L	A		
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U	O		M	C		U	X	S	S	V		W	O			G	V	S	S		
G	O		J	S		Q	E		A	V		A	O			M	W	S	R		
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Z	R		E	A		D	I	N	G	H	P	C	L	G	L	U	E	T	O	E	I

**Fun
Page
For
Every
Age**



FANCY FRUIT FEAST: MINI-MYSTERY LOGIC PUZZLE

In the quaint town of Fruityville, five friends - Max, Lily, Ben, Jo, and Emma - decided to have a fancy fruit feast. They each chose a different fruit and ate a different number of pieces. Using the clues, can you solve who ate what fruit and how many pieces at the



		Fruit					Number of Pieces				
		Apples	Blueberries	Grapes	Watermelon	Bananas	1	2	3	4	5
Name	Max										
	Lily										
	Ben										
	Jo										
	Emma										
Number of pieces	1										
	2										
	3										
	4										
	5										

TIPS

- ☐ USE 'X' to eliminate possibilities
- ☐ Write 'YES' or use a tick to show a discovery.
- ☐ Read the clue statements more than once!
- ☐ Take your time to think about what the information means and how that can help you eliminate possibilities or connect answers.

CLUES

- Max did not eat the bananas, but he ate more pieces than the person who ate the apples.
- Lily ate fewer pieces than the person who ate the grapes, but she didn't eat blueberries.
- Ben didn't eat the apples or the watermelon, and he ate more than one piece of fruit.
- Jo ate more pieces than Emma, but less than Lily.
- The person who ate the bananas ate five pieces.
- Emma ate just one piece of fruit, but it wasn't watermelon or grapes.
- The person who ate the watermelon ate two pieces.
- The person who ate the apples ate three pieces.





In Our Prayers

In the Hospital in the Past Month

(none)

Fighting Cancer

Nancy Brooks, Rob Calder II,
Sandy Crawford, Byron Webb

Prolonged Illness / Challenges

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

Long Term Care / Assisted Living

Jean Aldag, Jim Frey, Lynda Gustafson,
Anna Martin, Marie Meyer

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 illness and injury, those who
are grieving, our conference leaders,
all governmental leaders, those who are serving
in our military, the youth and all caregivers.

Military Service Members

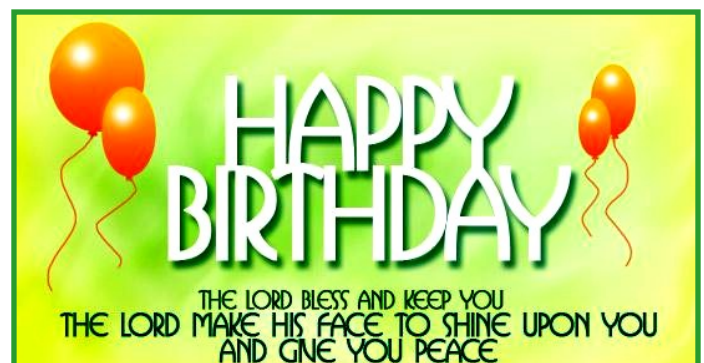
Ryan Webb (Army), Jared Koch (Air Force),
Nate Hill (Air National Guard)

Sympathies

Our deepest sympathies go out
to the family of Jo Peterson, sister of Nancy Roesse,
who passed away on August 23.
Please keep the family in your prayers.

September Birthdays

September 2	Marilyn Elward (90)
September 5	Ernestine Dellaca (99)
September 9	Lois Palmer
September 10	Chad Mc Brayer
September 13	Becky Emerson
September 14	Charlotte Mc Brayer
September 21	Ruth Cole
September 22	Nancy Briggs
September 24	Jim Frey
September 25	Steve Emerson
September 27	Rosey Astle (90)
September 27	Jerry Moore
September 27	Charles Newlan
September 28	Sofia Munoz
September 29	Kenneth Meischner



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!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:00am Worship 10:15am Ad Council Meeting	31 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry	1	2 12:00pm REFRESH	3 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles	4 4:00pm Celebration of Life for Jo Peterson	5
6 9:00am Worship Communion Sunday	7 Labor Day OFFICE CLOSED	8 LOF Book Fair	9 12:00pm REFRESH LOF Book Fair 6:00pm Puppets for Jesus Meeting	10 LOF Book Fair 11:30am East Peoria Woman's Club 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles	11 LOF Book Fair Patriot Day 9:00am - 5:30pm LOF Grandparent's Day Celebration	12 8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast 4:00pm Breakfast Setup
13 9:00am Worship Friends for Mission Breakfast 11:00am - 4:00pm Private Event	14 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 6:15pm 4-H Meeting	15	16 12:00pm REFRESH 7:00am - 12:00pm LOF Picture Day 6:00pm Puppets for Jesus Meeting	17 9:00am - 12:00pm Early Head Start 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles	18	19 11:30am Ladies Luncheon @ EP Avanti's
20 9:00am Worship	21 Messenger Newsletter Deadline 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry	22 First Day of Autumn	23 12:00pm REFRESH	24 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles	25	26 4:00pm Breakfast Setup
27 9:30am Worship Outside	28 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry	29	30 12:00pm REFRESH	1 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles	2	3

"When you are reluctant to change, think of the beauty of autumn."

- V. V. Brown



Sofia Munoz, receives a student study Bible as her junior high graduation gift from Pastor Ted.



Back-to-School Blessing Sunday
Pastor Ted blessed backpacks & school staff for the year ahead.



Connie Wieck leads the Children's Moment and teaches the kids a prayer while sharing the story of her time serving in Southeast Asia.

We want to see your faith in action!

If you have pictures from a recent EPFUMC worship service or ministry event, please share them with the office. Email your photos to office@epfumc.org.

First United Methodist Church
154 E. Washington St.
East Peoria, IL 61611-2529

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

12:00 p.m. Wednesday REFRESH