



Watseka First United Methodist Church

***‘Welcoming Neighbors of All Ages to Experience God,
Share Hope, and Be Changed by Christ’s Love’***

Volume 54 Issue 9

September 1, 2026

Thoughts from Pastor Ashley

Praising God in All We Do

Dear Church Family,

Over the past few weeks, we have been reflecting together on what it means to praise God. Praise is more than something we sing on Sunday morning. It is a way of life—a response to who God is and to all that God has done for us.



The Psalms remind us again and again to remember God's faithfulness, to tell the stories of God's goodness, and to give God thanks. We praise God with our voices when we sing, with our hearts when we give thanks, and with our lives when we serve others. Every time we gather for worship, encourage a neighbor, offer a helping hand, or share what we have been given, we have another opportunity to say, “Thank you, God, for your goodness.”

One of the beautiful things about praise is that we don't have to praise God alone. We praise God **together**. Our voices become one when we sing, our gifts become a blessing when we give, and our hands become instruments of God's love when we serve.

That is why I hope you will join us for our **Fifth Sunday Worship and Fellowship Service with Cissna Park UMC on Sunday, August 30, at 9:30 a.m.** Following worship, we will gather for a **Blessing Bag Meal Pack and luncheon**. We will worship together, enjoy fellowship together, and then put our faith into action by preparing Blessing Bags for others.

What a wonderful picture of praise: **voices raised in worship, tables shared in fellowship, and hands busy serving our neighbors.**

May we continue to discover that praise is not confined to a song or a sanctuary. Praise is something we carry with us into the world. May our worship, our fellowship, our generosity, and our service all become ways of telling the story of God's faithfulness.

As Psalm 105 reminds us, “*Remember the wondrous works he has done.*” May we remember, may we give thanks, and may we live our praise.

With gratitude and joy,

Pastor Ashley

AD Board Meeting August 17, 2026



The AD Council met on August 17, 2026. The Finance Report was reviewed, and staff salaries and a tentative new budget were discussed. The parsonage roof needs a complete tear down. Work to replace the roof will begin in mid-September. A new HVAC system is also needed. Our new color copier has been very helpful in providing for the church office needs. It is user friendly and hooked up to Wi-Fi. The Council approved the hiring of a new pianist to replace Hannah. Sue Lange is the pianist for the CPUMC and will also play for our church starting on September 6th. The Food Pantry has seen a 20% increase in the last 7 months when compared with this time last year. September is Hunger Action Month, and Monical's will be holding a fundraiser for this on September 15th. Thanksgiving bags will be passed out again this year. Last year a total of 346 bags were distributed. Women In Faith will meet next on September 3rd at 1:30. John Franklin, Hospice Chapin will speak on Caregiving. The Rummage Sale will be September 25th and 26th. Rummage may be brought after September 5th. We will be enjoying a 5th Sunday get-together with the CPUMC congregation on August 30th with worship service at 9:30, followed by a Meal Pack service project at 10:30, and lunch to follow. We have 7 people who have joined our Member Care Team. They will provide cards, calls and home visits for people from church who are home or nursing home bound. Sunday School will begin after Labor Day. If there is no teacher available that day, students will remain in worship. Pastor Ashley is offering a Bible Study in October to meet after worship for 6 weeks. This is so working members can attend. Charge Conference will be October 4th at 5:30 p.m. at Rantoul UMC.

Next Newsletter Deadline



The next newsletter deadline will be **Friday, September 18th**. Please have all articles and information for the September newsletter to me in the office by 2:00pm. You can also email information to me at office@watsekaumc.org. ---Thanks, Melinda

United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith group will meet on Thursday, September 3 at 1:30 pm in the church fellowship hall. The program "Caregiving Challenge" will be presented by John Franklin, Iroquois Memorial Hospice chaplain and pastor at Watseka First Presbyterian Church. This program is available for anyone. A caregiver can be an older adult taking care of their spouse, children or grandchildren taking care of parents or grandparents, neighbors or friends taking care of people in their neighborhood, anyone caring for someone else. Caregivers are increasingly diverse across race, income, and generation.



United
Women
in Faith

The Fall District meeting of United Women in Faith will be held at the Catlin United Methodist Church on Saturday, September 19. The program will be about Living Alternatives, a faith-based organization committed to honoring God by providing care, compassionate support, and honest information to those facing pregnancy decisions in Illinois and Indiana. Registration is requested by September 5. Our Watseka UWF unit will pay the \$18 registration fee. If interested in attending, please contact Diann Peabody.

Rummage Sale is September 25 and September 26!

Rummage may be brought to the church after Friday, September 4.

Ways you can help!

- Help with table setup after church on Sunday, September 6
- Come to workdays on Monday-Thursday, September 21-24
- Volunteer to work during the sale on Friday and/or Saturday
- Help with clean-up after the sale 11:30 am to 1 pm on Saturday. The big part of clean-up will be the packing of items and the taking down of tables.



Please let Debby Sapp, DeDe Yenerich, or Diann Peabody know how you can help!

Your help is needed and appreciated!

Food Pantry Update



In July we served 172 households—353 adults and 116 children. Year to date numbers are 3,012 people.

Our delivery from Eastern Illinois Food Bank in Urbana is Tuesday, September 1, at 8:00 am. The monthly trip to the Midwest Foodbank in Bloomington is Friday, September 11. The trailer should arrive back at our fellowship hall around 11:30 am. All volunteers to help unload these deliveries are welcome and appreciated!

September is Hunger Action Month, an effort to raise awareness about food insecurity. Currently, 1 in every 7 adults in Iroquois County is considered food insecure. The problem is greater among children—1 in every 6 children in Iroquois County is food-insecure.

SEPTEMBER IS HUNGER ACTION MONTH

September has been designated Hunger Action Month by Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. It is an effort to raise awareness about food insecurity. And to emphasize the fact that everyone can do something to make a difference in their local community. What are some specific ways to act against hunger and support the work at Watseka Area Food Pantry?

1. **Tuesday, 9/15 is Community Day at Monical's Pizza in Watseka and Gilman.** Present the flier included in this newsletter in Monical's or mention the *Community Day* for the Watseka Area Food Pantry when ordering online and Monical's will donate 20% of your purchase to Watseka Area Food Pantry.
2. **Sponsor 1 or more Thanksgiving bags at \$12 per bag.** Holidays are stressful for food-insecure families, and this is one small way to help ease their stress. This year, we plan to distribute 360 Thanksgiving bags during the 6 weeks leading up to the holiday. This is in addition to the food that families typically receive. Each bag contains all the ingredients for a simple holiday meal and is valued at \$22. Donations should be mailed to Watseka Area Food Pantry, 301 S. Fourth Street, Watseka, IL 60970.
3. **VOLUNTEER.** Some of the tasks that volunteers help with are unloading deliveries, answering phones, filling orders, and restocking shelves. For a small commitment of just 2 to 3 hours per week, you can make a big difference in your community. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please call or stop by the food pantry Monday-Friday, 9-11am.

What will you do this month to take action against hunger?



Thank You Notes!

Bill and I want to thank our church family for all the thoughts and prayers, cards, kind words, and hugs we received from you after the passing of our son Bob. Your sympathies brought us much needed comfort during this difficult time.

Bill and Carol Christy
Bob Christy family

Holy Stitchers,

I wanted to thank you very much for the beautiful Afghan you made for me. I look forward to using it! You do such wonderful work for both our community and the ministry. I was so excited to graduate from UIUC and now looking forward to attending vet school at Ross University. It will be an incredible experience to study internationally and be surrounded by unique wildlife. The school is located on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean, and I will be moving at the end of August.

Thank you so much!

Caitlin Corzine

September Birthdays

9-8	Jalyn Newman	9-20	Caroll Bull
	Lea Sieveking		Sherry Klinefelter
9-9	Mick Thurston	9-21	Paul Corzine
9-10	Benjamin Leitz	9-22	Karsyn Valentine
9-12	Owen Kingdon	9-23	Kim Onnen
9-14	Soni Knapp	9-26	Diann Peabody
9-15	Steve Knapp	9-29	Chuck Peabody
9-17	Bradley Leitz		



September Anniversaries

9-4-2021	Charlee & Tanner Davenport	
9-4-1971	Donna & James Price	(55 Yrs.)
9-5-1987	Eileen & Roger Burns	
9-6-1980	Jo & Rodney Newman	
9-8-1984	Joan & John Cook	
9-14-1985	Doug & Tammie Warner	
9-16-1978	Annette & Lee Elliott	
9-21-1991	Lynn & Steve Canady	(35 Yrs.)



Super Senior Birthdays

From the Member Care Team - These Super Senior folks are celebrating birthdays in September.

Lea Sieveking
315 East Ash Street, #51
Watseka IL 60970

September 8

Carol Bull
PO Box 265
Woodland IL 60974

September 20

Diann Peabody
P.O. Box 26
Crescent City, IL 60928-0266

September 26

Chuck Peabody
P.O. Box 26
Crescent City, IL 60928-0266

September 29



September Radio Broadcast Support

Sept. 6: Rod & Jo Newman

Sept. 13: Charles & Rhonda Leitz in celebration of their sons' birthdays: Ben on Sept. 10 & Brad on Sept. 17

Sept. 20: Allison Storm in remembrance of Ron & Brooke Storm

Sept. 27: Chuck & Diann Peabody in celebration of their birthdays

September Ushers/Greeters

Sept. 6: Debby Sapp, Julie Burd (Labor Day Weekend)

Sept. 13: Barb & Larry Hasbargen

Sept. 20: Not available at press time

Sept. 27: Not available at press time

September Liturgist: Not available at press time

WFUMC General Fund Report: July 2026 **General Fund Income & Expense Summary**

	July	Y-T-D
Income	\$12,395.07	\$100,005.93
Expenses	-\$16,047.15	-\$112,512.65

These figures do not include \$7,243.55 due for
2026 Y-T-D conference apportionments.

Thank you for your monetary support which allows us to share Jesus' story and love, fulfilling the mission and vision of our church.

Holy Stitches Update

The Holy Stitches met on Tuesday, August 18th. We all brought a project to work on while catching up with everyone. We discussed sending out a letter to Acadia Care at Watseka, Heritage Woods, The Iroquois Resident Home to see if they are in need any lap blankets for their residents and we will also send a letter to Harbor House to see if they are in need of any blankets or comfort bears. We all agreed this needed to be done so we can schedule a sewing day for comfort bears and know how many lap blankets are needed so we can get those done also.



The Holy Stitches had a sewing day on Saturday, August 15th to make one handle bags, receiving blankets for the Layette Kits, and items for the Hygiene kits. Rhonda Leitz will deliver these items to Midwest Mission next time she goes. The Holy Stitches have another sewing day planned for Saturday, September 12th. The Holy Stitches' next regular meeting is on Tuesday, September 15th.

Special Dates for September 2026

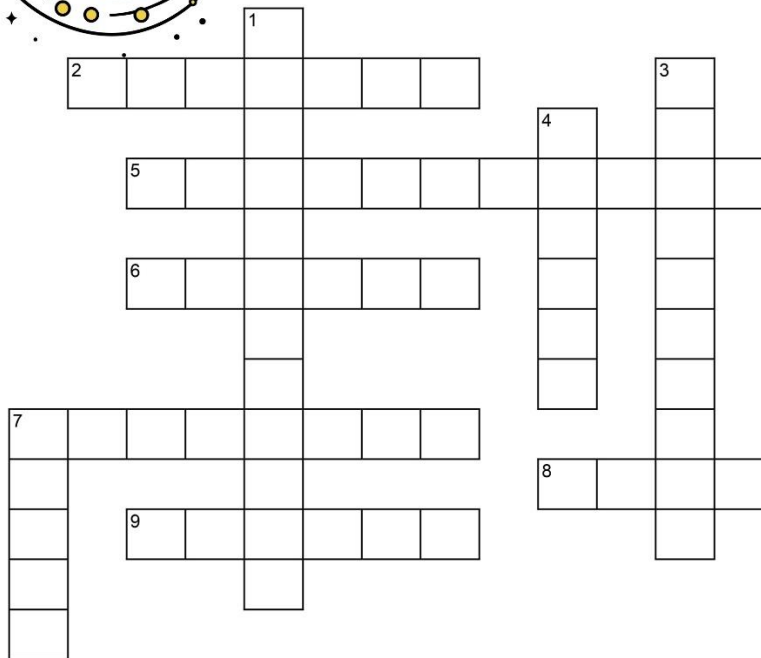
- Labor Day, *September 7, 2026*
- Patriot Day, *September 11, 2026*
- National Grandparents Day, *September 13, 2026*
- Hispanic Heritage Month, *September 15-October 15, 2026*
- First Day of Autumn, *September 22, 2026*

Puzzle!



BEATITUDES

Fill in the blanks below to complete the crossword. Answers are based on Matthew 5:1-13, NIV.



ACROSS

2. _____ and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.
5. Blessed are the _____, for they will see God.
6. Blessed are those who _____ and thirst after righteousness.
7. Blessed are the _____, for they will receive mercy.
8. Blessed are the _____, for they will inherit the earth.
9. Blessed are those who hunger and _____, for they will be filled.

DOWN

1. Blessed are the _____, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
3. Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness' sake.
4. Great is your _____ in heaven.
7. Blessed are those who _____, for they will be comforted.

Answer key: 2 Across: Rejoice, 5 Across: pure in heart, 6 Across: hunger
7 Across: merciful, 8 Across: meek, 9 Across: thirst, 1 Down: poor in spirit
3 Down: persecuted, 4 Down: reward, 7 Down: mourn

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Rev. Ashley Clifton Email: ashleyncifton@gmail.com
7:00 p.m. Radio Broadcast on WIBK, 96.9FM and www.wibkradio.com
Online Giving at <https://bit.ly/2SlvyCr>



First United
Methodist Church



First UMC Watseka

Our Mission: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
Our Vision: To welcome neighbors of all ages to experience God, share hope,
and be changed by Christ's love.

September 2025 Church Calendar

*Calendar is subject to change.

Tues., Sept. 1	8:00am- Food Pantry Delivery 9:00am- Food Pantry Board Meeting 11:00am- Staff Meeting
Sun., Sept. 6	10:30am- Worship Service
Mon., Sept. 7	Labor Day- Church Office & Food Pantry Closed
Tues., Sept. 8	11:00am- Staff Meeting
Fri., Sept. 11	11:30am- Food Pantry Delivery
Sat., Sept. 12	9:00am- Holy Stitches Sewing Day
Sun., Sept. 13	10:30am- Worship Service
Tues., Sept. 15	11:00am- Staff Meeting 7:00pm- Holy Stitches Mtg
Fri., Sept. 18	2:00pm- Newsletter Deadline
Sun., Sept. 20	10:30am- Worship Service
Mon., Sept. 21	Rummage Sale Workday
Tues., Sept. 22	Rummage Sale Workday 11:00am- Staff Meeting
Wed., Sept. 23	Rummage Sale Workday
Thurs., Sept. 24	Rummage Sale Workday
Fri., Sept. 25	Noon -5:00- Rummage Sale
Sat., Sept. 26	9:00am to Noon- Rummage Sale
Noon to ?	Rummage Sale clean-up
Sun., Sept. 27	9:15am- Worship Service
Tues., Sept. 29	11:00am- Staff Meeting

