

HAPPY New Year

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS; AND AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE.

PHIL 4:4

January 2026



Happy New Year!

The beginning of a year always invites reflection. We look back at what we've carried, what we've learned, and what we're still holding. And we look forward—sometimes with hope, sometimes with uncertainty—wondering what kind of world we are entering next.

There is no question that our world is changing quickly. Technology, artificial intelligence, and rapid social shifts are reshaping how we work, communicate, make decisions, and even understand our own value. For some, these changes feel exciting. For others, unsettling. For many, both at the same time.

As your pastor, I want to say this clearly as we begin 2026: **God is not surprised by this moment. And the church is not unprepared for it.**

This January, we will begin a new sermon series titled *Welcomed and Befriended: Radical Hospitality and Divine Friendship in the Age of AI*. It's a little bit long title as I've been working on this sermon series for half a year. Together, we will explore a simple but powerful truth: in a world that increasingly measures efficiency, speed, and productivity, Christian discipleship begins somewhere else—with welcome, relationship and love.

We will be reminded that before we do anything, we are **welcomed by God**. The church is called to be a place where people can **belong and stay**, not just attend. That we are guided not by algorithms, but by the **Holy Spirit who calls us friends**. And finally, that we are sent into the world as disciples who know when to stop—who pause long enough to love, to notice and to stand with our neighbors.

This series is not about fearing technology or rejecting progress. AI can be a useful tool. But it must never replace what makes us

Church Events

Tues./Thurs. @ 4:00 pm
Exercise Group (Activity Room)

Wed. @ 9:30 am
Bible Study (Fireside Room)

Thurs. @ 2 pm or 6:30 pm
Fiber Group (Fireside Room)

Sat. @ 8:00 am
Men's Bible Study (Fireside Room)

1/1/2026– Happy New Year!!

Sun. 1/4 @ 9 am Take down
Christmas Decorations
between services

Thurs. 1/8 @ 9:30 am Greeting
Card Ministry (Fellowship Hall)

Thurs. 1/15 @ 11:30 am– Ladies
Luncheon, A's Kitchen

Sun. 1/18, Youth Group with Aaron after 2nd service

Mon. 1/19 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day


Sun. 1/25, after the 2nd service
– Annual Workshop

human, or what makes the church the church. We will reflect honestly on the changes around us, while grounding ourselves deeply in Scripture, prayer and shared life together.


I invite you to begin this year with an open heart. Come ready to listen, to reflect and to grow. Engage the sermon series, join the conversations, and if possible, participate in the small group materials that will help us practice these teachings together.

May 2026 be a year when you feel deeply welcomed by God. May it be a year when friendships deepen, compassion widens and faith takes root in daily life. And may we, as Sterling Wesley United Methodist Church, walk into this new year **together**—encouraged, blessed and formed as disciples of Jesus Christ for a changing world.

With gratitude and hope,
Rev. Dr. Paul H. Lee



Why this church?
What's our story?
Who are we?
What do people experience?
Sterling Wesley Lover's
Annual Workshop
Jan. 25th (Sun), 11am
Connected or crowded?
What are we forming?
Visible faithfulness?
Shared story?



5TH SATURDAY
SAUK VALLEY FOOD BANK
JANUARY 31ST (SAT)
QUESTION? PLEASE FIND ANDY PITSCH





Snow Day, Fun Day



Worship Helpers

January 8am

Door Greeter(s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist
1/4 Rita Smith	Rebecca Tieman/Shannon Klausing	Rory Smith
1/11 Randy Clodfelter	Rebecca Tieman/Shannon Klausing	Pam Clodfelter
1/18 Jan Glover & Larry Schuchard	Rebecca Tieman/Shannon Klausing	Darla Ewing
1/25 Rita Smith	Rebecca Tieman/Shannon Klausing	Rory Smith

January 10am

Door Greeter(s)	Usher/Acolytes	Liturgist	Matthew Meetings
1/4 Rory & Rita Smith	Bob & Cheryl Allen Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Harper Johnson	Happy New Year No Class today!
1/11 Mary Sue Puckett & Sharon Puckett	Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Carolyn Heuck	Nancy Pitsch
1/18 Jan Davey	Andy Pitsch & Brent Boelkins Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Jeff Davey	Nancy Pitsch
1/25 Andy Pitsch	Andy Pitsch & Brent Boelkins Steve Lopez/Bill Parker	Nancy Pitsch	Jamie Schwingle

Thank You & Announcements

Greeting Card Ministry,

Will be meeting on Thursday, January 8th at 9:30 AM in Fellowship Hall. Come Join the fun!!! All are welcome to attend!!! Hope to see you there!!!



The Ladies Luncheon Group, will be meeting on Thursday, January, 15th @11:30 AM at A's Kitchen in Rock Falls.

Come join the fun!!



Dear Wesley United Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for your generous Thanksgiving donations! Your kindness is making a meaningful difference for families in our community. Because of your support, more households will be able to enjoy a special holiday meal. We are truly grateful for your compassion and your willingness to help others. Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Angela Schneider/Sterling Township

Dear Wesley,

Just when we have some concerns about getting low on our funds, our Lord steps in along with your church and surprises us with much needed assistance. Thank you for blessing us with the Trust Fund. May your church and it's members have a very blessed Christmas, celebrating the coming and birth of our savior!

FISH Pantry

The Sauk Valley Foodbank gratefully acknowledges your generous donation of \$1,525. Your contribution is deeply appreciated and has already been put to good use.

Sauk Valley Food Bank

Missions Team would like to thank the following people who rang the bell for the Salvation Army and raised \$403.39. Jan Glover, Larry Schuchard, Lacy Young, Marianne Rosser, Carolyn Heuck, Jean Moe, Cory & Katie Canas, Linda Kavran, Carolyn Allen, Amy Lopez, The Greenfield family, Rebecca Tieman, Shannon Klausung, James Allen, Jaxon Williams, Ellie and Myla Wendelken and Molly Papoccia. A special Thank You to Jan Glover who oversaw the bell ringing for Roberta Fredericks who had a conflict arise.

Thank you to my wonderful Wesley Family for the prayers and cards as I heal. Small gains add up to success!

With love,

Barb Quick



Children's Christmas Program





Ugly Sweater Day





Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Worship Schedule



Jan. 4th-	Epiphany of the Lord Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8 Before the Machine, We are Welcomed
Jan. 11th-	Baptism of the Lord Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:9-13 A Place to Stay: Community in the Age of AI
Jan. 18th-	2nd Sunday after the Epiphany John 15:12-16; Romans 8:14-17 Not the Algorithm, but the Spirit: The God Who Calls Us Friends
Jan 25th-	3rd Sunday after the Epiphany Luke 10:25-27; Micah 6:8 The Machine Passes By, But Love Remains

1/1	Joan Partridge	1/18	Reid Blackburn
1/3	Norma Church		Ryan Blackburn
	August Johnson		Bowen Mallhi
1/4	Linda Dirks	1/20	Randy Clodfelter
1/5	Joshua Greenfield		Janne Rausa
1/8	Joe Gatz	1/22	Mitchell Clodfelter
	Carol Shaw		Alice (Cathy) Williams
1/11	Susie Cedro	1/24	Antonio Castaneda
	Melissa Freas	1/26	Darrin Driscoll
1/12	Matthew Taylor	1/27	Bella Styles
1/13	Molly Papoccia	1/30	Lynn Hammer
1/14	Christie Freas	1/31	Wendy Fitzanko
	Michael Quick		



1/6	Jon & Christies Freas
1/28	Edd & Marianne Rosser

Missions Corner

Thank you for your contributions to **LOOSE COINS** in the month of **December** we were able to raise **\$ 116.41** for **LOAVES & FISHES**.

Christmas Envelopes also contributed **\$1,700.08** to Loaves & Fishes/ UMCOR Disaster Relief Fund.

LOOSE COINS for **January** will go to Rev. Young Seon (Christina) Kim. She serves as director of the Next Generation Ministries of the church in Tanzania, based in Dar es Salaam. Objectives of Rev. Kim's work include preparing pastors and lay leaders with skills in relating to young people and analysis of the youth ministries presently underway in each of the church's districts.

January we will be collecting **Laundry Detergent** for pantries & travel-sized toiletries.

Total for Thanksgiving envelopes totaled \$125 and Thanksgiving baskets totaled \$960.

Sterling Wesley United Methodist Church

2200 16th Ave.
Sterling, IL 61081

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church
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Website: www.sterlingwesley.org
Email: office@sterlingwesley.org

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
Join us for in-person Sunday services
8:00 am and 10:00 am.

We will continue to Livestream worship
on Facebook at 10 a.m.
Find us on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/SterlingWesleyUMC>

Mission Corner

Sterling Wesley UMC has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts.

We currently are receiving: Shampoo

***January's collection for local pantries is Laundry detergent.**

*Travel-sized toiletries

***Loose coins for January will benefit Rev. Young Seon (Christina) Kim**