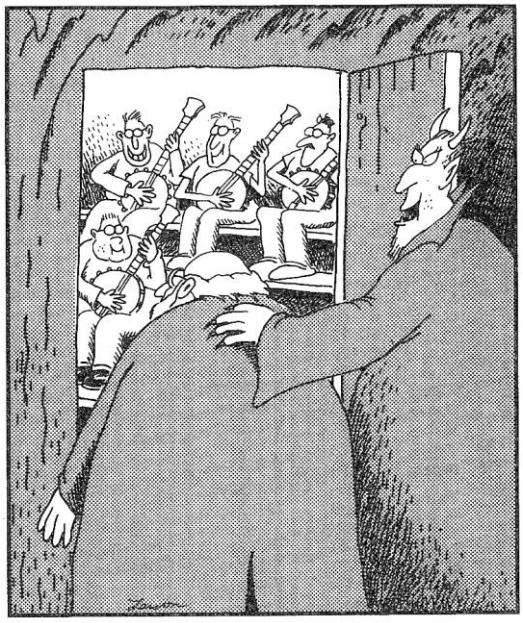
The Newsletter
The United Methodist Churches
of
Laurens & Varina, Iowa

For the week of November 1, 2026 **Volume 45** **Issue 6**

From My Perspective

Pastor Jim



"Your room is right in here, Maestro."

"…give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
1 Thessalonians 5:18

I'm not sure who this particular "Maestro" is supposed to be. Pretty sure it doesn't matter since the whole idea here is one of what a private "hell" is meant to be. This might seem a bit odd, or out of place, but I also think it connects the verse from the Apostle Paul's letter to the people who were the church in Thessalonica. I mean given the fact that in this cartoon the "Maestro" is in hell.

But is it really that odd or out of place? What the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write is the truth that God desires us to give thanks ***to him*** regardless of what it is that we may be going through. I think that might include what we call a "living" hell. Generally, that means that we are suffering through something painful – and that pain can be physical, emotional, spiritual, or any combination of those or others. So why should we give thanks at times like those?

Given more time and space, I could provide a number of different answers to that question, but I'm going to go with just one. We're not giving thanks to God for ***what*** we're going through, we're giving thanks to God ***for being with us*** as we go through it. Whatever it is. And God can be with us in a number of different ways. For me, he's with us through the people that he puts in our lives to walk with us in whatever we're experiencing. To be able to give thanks in all circumstances means developing and nurturing an attitude of gratitude that helps us to focus on God who gives, sustains, and redeems our lives – instead of focusing inward on circumstances that can easily lead us away from God and our faith and trust in him.

For me, that's part of the point of celebrating Thanksgiving. By setting aside this one day to emphasize giving thanks to God – we should be reminded of what we should be doing – how we should be living – each and every day of our lives. So, when that "living hell" does come – we can face it with confidence that God is with us and give him thanks. Regardless of the circumstance.

Blessings and Happy Thanksgiving,
Pastor Jim

Mudroom Message

As children of God, we picture heaven as a house with many rooms that Jesus has prepared for us. We also know that God's kingdom encompasses our earthly dwellings, including homes with mudrooms.

At ground level, right inside the door, a mudroom provides a place to take off boots or shoes so that mud will not get tracked into the rest of the house. Besides mates for footwear, the mudroom might have cubbyholes for hats and mittens, hooks for jackets, and nooks for sports equipment. Some mudrooms provide a place for the laundry and utility sink, plus sundry supplies needed to clean up muddy stuff.

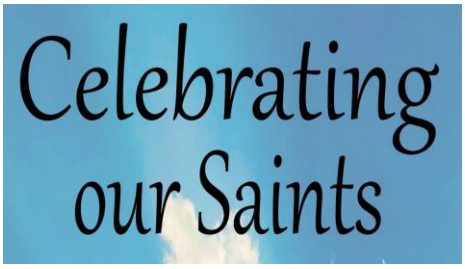
Inside and Out:
Childen love to stomp in puddles. On a rainwashed sidewalk, the spray glistens in the sun. Mud puddles, in contrast, sully footwear and spatter pant legs.

In a mudroom, we see the indications of activities pursued and choices made. Spiritually speaking, we do well to look at whether our actions have sparkled with the purity of Baptismal water or leave us with some cleaning up to do in our soulful mudrooms.

On All Saints Day, we celebrate the inspiration of holy men and women who have made their splash on Earth before us. Even the most virtuous saints did not lead perfectly holy lives, though. When the Lord greets us at the door to heaven, picture a welcome mat for all who enter to leave the last traces of sins on Earth behind.

We mourn disheartening losses and feel dispirited at times. We find it hard to endure without resenting things we can't change. Our loving God challenges us to mature in righteousness, peacemaking, and mercy.

On the Tool Shelf:
Blessings will come! Jesus promised that the clean of heart will see God, who supplies the grace we need to spiff up and move from earthly mudrooms to awaited places in the Father's house.



Varina UMC:

Dorthy Mernin passed away peacefully September 7, 2026.

Laurens UMC:

Rita Schmidt passed away peacefully June 15, 2026.

Usher Schedule:

November 8: Greg Hertz, Brad Rubel, and John Sobotka
November 15: Kelly Tate, and Hunter & Jennifer Valentine
November 22: Jean Murray, and Angie & Aaron Christenson
November 29: Deb Hertz, and Carla & Randy Gustafson

Liturgist Schedule:

November 1 & 8: Kelly Tate
November 15 & 22: Amy Gustafson
November 29: Jean Murray

Acolyte Schedule:

November 8: Samantha Zylstra & Gage Gustafson
November 15: Reagan Hertz & Jacob Sobotka
November 22: Matt Rubel & Gage Gustafson
November 29: Reagan Hertz & Kamry Bailey

Thank you to everyone who participates, helps, performs & serves each Sunday morning to help make our worship service & fellowship a wonderful and meaningful experience for all in our worshipping & glorifying of our LORD.

If you are unable to work on your date, please find a replacement and let the office know at 712-841-4476

Greetings Church!

This year's Community Thanksgiving service will be 3:00 PM, Sunday November 22nd at the Care Center here in town. I encourage you to come to share in giving thanks to God with the residents - some of which are members of our church.

Even if you will not be able to attend you can still let your thanks be known. We are asking that folks from each of our churches share something that they are thankful for this past year to be read in the service.

There will be an insert available in the bulletins the next two Sundays, or, you can email me (eyeowaypastor@gmail.com) or the office (methodist@laurensumc.org).

Thank you, and continue to give thanks in all circumstances!

Pastor Jim

Varina Announcements . . .

Varina Community Coffee Dates for November: Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25
From 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Everyone is welcome.

November Confirmation Dates: November 1, 15, and 29 immediately following worship service.

November 4: NOTE DATE CHANGE!

Varina Mary Circle will meet in the home of Eldona Hornor at 1:30 pm
Hostess & Devotions: Eldona Horner
Program: Harriet Boothby
Executive Meeting: 1:30 pm

November 18: Varina Administrative Council Meeting @ 7:00 PM.
All are welcome to attend.

November 29:

- ✓ Hanging of the Greens and church decorating followed by Potluck.
- ✓ Hat, mitten, and sock donations due.
- ✓ Personal hygiene products for men and good used clothing for men donations for Church of Damascus are due.

Laurens Announcements . . .

November 5: UMW Memorial Service at 2:00 PM in the Wesley Room. Sarah Winkler will lead the service. Serving is Julie Potter.

November 7: UMM monthly breakfast meeting at 8:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Pastor Jim will provide breakfast and Monty Potter will lead the lesson.

November 15: Administrative Council Meeting at 11:30 AM in the Wesley Room. All are welcome to attend.

November 21: Holiday Bazaar from 9:30 AM – 12:30.

November 29 and 30 and December 1: Festival of Trees Setup. November 29 setup is from 3:00 to 6:00 PM. On November 30 and December 1, setup is from 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Holiday bazaar

The Laurens United Methodist Women will be holding their annual bazaar on Saturday, November 21, 2026! We are starting a little earlier this year at 9:30 a.m. We will be serving lasagna for a noon lunch starting at 11:00 a.m.

There are many ways for everyone to participate in helping to make this bazaar a success! We have sign-up sheets available in the church narthex for making Christmas cookies; baked goods for breads and cinnamon rolls, pies, muffins, sweet breads; casseroles; treat of month items; good as new items; wood signs; knitting and embroidery items; and for workers the day of the bazaar!

Proceeds from this bazaar are used to help support several local groups: Laurens Congregate Meals, Laurens Care Center, Laurens Food Pantry, Caring lunches, Shaya Bee, the Laurens minister discretionary fund, and our church budget.

Mark your calendars to join us on Saturday, November 21, 2026!

Bazaar Information:

- Good As New: There is a table in Fellowship Hall for your donations. Items do not need to be marked. Anything left after the bazaar will be taken to Good will or Fresh Start Market in Spencer.
- Treat of the Month:
- Quilting, knitting, and crocheting are needed! Anything left at the end of the bazaar, you take home.
- Baked Goods: bread, cinnamon rolls, pies, cakes, bars, and muffins are needed as we no longer bake bread at the church.
- Frozen Casseroles: Suggestions include lasagna, chicken dressing, enchiladas, meatloaf, tator-tot casserole, beef and noodles, pizza pasta, ham balls, pulled pork, twice baked potatoes. There are 8 X 8 containers in the kitchen for you to use if you would like. Casseroles need to be at the church by 8:30 AM on the day of the bazaar.
- Cookie Walk: All shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors are needed. Frosted cut outs are the best sellers.
- Also selling during bazaar: assorted packaged nuts and Jumpy Monkey Premium Coffee. Order sheets for the coffee are in the Narthex.

Silent Auction

A silent auction for the nativity will be held during the UMW Holiday bazaar. Bidding will close at 12:30 p.m. on November 21, 2026. You do not need to be present to win. This nativity set was designed and created by Doc VanGenderen.

Those wishing to reach out and send well wishes to Wendy and Terry, below are their addresses:

Wendy Hopkins
Accura Healthcare of Pomeroy
303 East 7th St
Room 1E
Pomeroy, IA 50575

Terry Spanier
Accura Healthcare of Pomeroy
303 East 7th St
Room 12E
Pomeroy, IA 50575

ELECTION DAY

SOUP AND PIE SUPPER

Bethany Lutheran Church

Tuesday November 3rd

Serving from 4:30-7:00

Chili, Chicken Noodle & Broccoli Cheese

Pies, Bars, and Beverages

Call 841-2181 Delivery

Free will offering

SWAT TEAM November Dates:

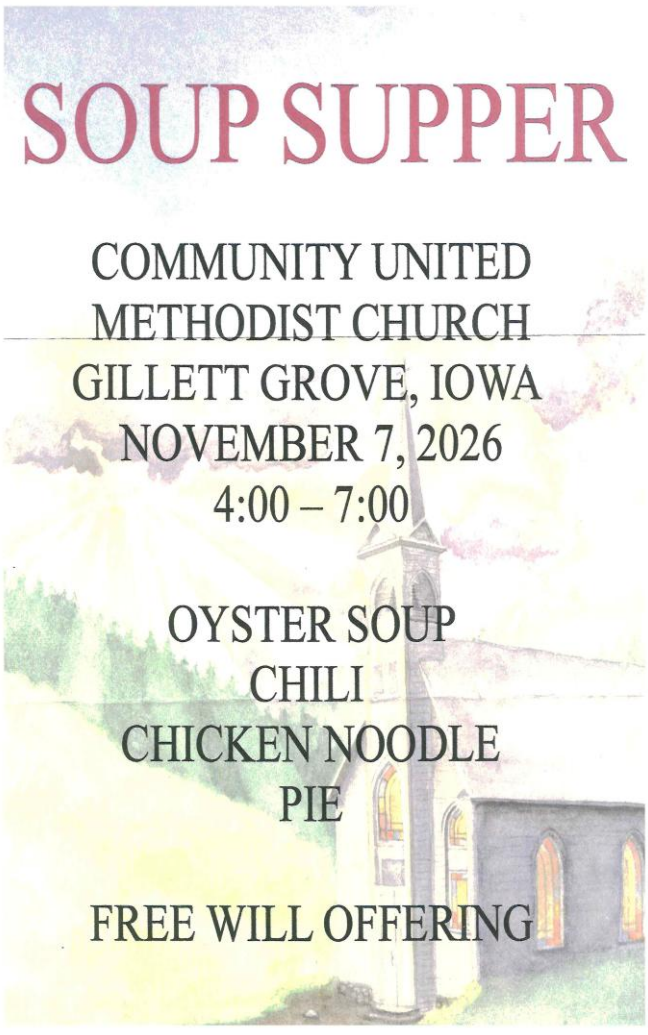
November 4

November 18

SWAT: Christ's Special Forces

Noisy Quarters
for the months
of October and November will
go to Toys for Tots.

Annual Veterans Day Dinner
Wednesday-November 11, 2026
At the Laurens Community Center
Time: 11:00 AM -1:00 PM
Cost: Free Will Offering



UMW Local Reading Program 2026

Bible Reading- Books of the Bible	20 points/bk.	_____
Daily Devotion with bible readings. (Upper Room)	10 points/wk.	_____
Books from special reading list. (Blue dot books)	30 points/bk.	_____
Other books from church library.	20 points/bk.	_____
Books from other sources.	15 points/bk.	_____
Audio books.	15 points/bk.	_____
Reading children books to children or others. (Max 100 pts)	2 points/bk.	_____
Magazines		
Response	20 points/issue	_____
Guide Post	10 points/issue	_____
UMW-attendance at General Meetings	20 points/each	_____
TOTAL POINTS		_____

Name _____

Hi Everyone!
This is our local church reading program.
This report should be turned into the box in the church library.
Due date is Saturday, November 21st.
Thank you for your participation!

Deb Hertz, Program Resources/Reading

Happy Reading!

Due Date Nov. 21

2026 REGISTRATION FORM

DUE SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026
to Laurens Library or
assistantdir@laurenspubliclibrary.com

LIKE US ON facebook

at Laurens United Methodist Church

- ***TREE: must be artificial, no flocked! Bring your own, or use one of ours!***
- ***REQUIRED****: Tree skirt & Safe Extension Cord (labeled with your name)*
- ***SET UP:*** Sunday, Nov 29th **3 to 6 pm;** Monday, Nov 30 & Tuesday, Dec. 1st **noon to 6**
- Space assigned for each tree will be indicated at the church.
- ***TEAR DOWN*** will be noon to 6 pm Mon, Dec 28 & Tues, Dec 29 (other times by appointment)
- **USE SOUTH DOOR** *(entrance off parking lot)* **FOR SET UP AND TEAR DOWN!**
- ***PLEASE*** *vacuum the area around your tree after set up AND take down.*
- Festival of Trees Committee will not be responsible for any damage or loss.
- Hosts needed all hours we are open. Sign up at the church.

save

submit

CONTACT_____**PHONE#**_____

E-MAIL_____

Display Type (Circle One) – Floor - Table – Wall – Wreath – Table Setting

TREE INFORMATION
(Check one) Providing my own _____ Need one _____

Approximate height _____ *Approximate width*_____

Decoration Theme - Please describe - be original - be creative – *WE NEED TO KNOW*

_____

_____

DISPLAY CARD INFORMATION

Name or Organization _____

Theme _____

Return to Laurens Library or e-mail registration form to Deb Hertz: assistantdir@laurenspubliclibrary.com

201 W. Main, Laurens, Iowa 50554

Laurens UMC Stewardship, Prayer Requests & Worship Schedule

Stewardship for November 2026:

	Weekly	Year-to-date	Special
Total Receipts for 2026		$ 105,868.55	$ 4,537.59
Total Receipts received for November 1:	$ 1,797.68	$ 107,666.23	$ 153.68 Oct. Qtrs.
Total Receipts received for November 8:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 15:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 22:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 29:	$	$	$
Projected Budget Needs 2026:	$ 3,979.66	$ 210,922.00	

Attendance for November 1:	Worship Service: 53	Sunday School: 28
Attendance for November 8:	Worship Service:	Sunday School:
Attendance for November 15:	Worship Service:	Sunday School:
Attendance for November 22:	Worship Service:	Sunday School:
Attendance for November 29:	Worship Service:	Sunday School:

Tom Domek, Dave Alstott, The Farmers, Barb Davis, Amy Wilcox, Sam Paton, Deb Spanier, Deborah Wingler, Wendy & Thaine Hopkins, Robyn Cornell, Mandy Reese, April Dalby, Pat Boughey, Amy Gustafson, Karen Johnson, Terry Spanier, Edward Schmidt, Kay Schrecengost, Methodist Church, nursing home residents, our church, victims of all natural disasters, those battling illness, our men & women of the armed forces, our world, and people in Ukraine, and people of Israel.

LAURENS UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, November 8, 2026:
Youth Sunday School 9:15-10:10 AM
Adult Sunday School 9:30-10:00 AM
Fellowship Coffee 10:00 AM
Worship @ 10:30 AM

321 Main, Varina, Iowa 50593

Varina UMC
Stewardship, Prayer Requests & Worship Schedule

Stewardship for November 2026:

	Weekly	Monthly	Special
Total Receipts for 2026:			
Total Receipts received for November 1:	$ 1,422.00	$ 1,422.00	$ 50.00
Total Receipts received for November 8:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 15:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 22:	$	$	$
Total Receipts received for November 29:	$	$	$

Projected Budget Needs for 2026: $ 633.15

Attendance for November 1: Worship Service: 42
Attendance for November 8: Worship Service:
Attendance for November 15: Worship Service:
Attendance for November 22: Worship Service:
Attendance for November 29: Worship Service:

Bev Morris, Little Evelyn, The Farmers, Barb Davis, Amy Wilcox, Mandy Reese, Marie Breon, Denise Tegels, Paul Kraft, Carol Siepker, Walt Collins, Julia Collins, The United Methodist Church, our nation, victims of all natural disasters, victims of violence, our men & women of the armed forces, our world, people of Israel, and people in Ukraine.

VARINA UMC WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

Sunday, November 8, 2026
Worship Service at 9:00 a.m.

If you are unable to join us for in-person worship, please worship with us online as our worship services are live-streamed on the Laurens United Methodist Church Facebook page @ 10:30 a.m. every Sunday. Worship services are also available on our website at www.laurensumc.org. Just click on "Sermons/Devotions."

If you or a loved one is ready to be removed from or need added to our prayer list, please call the church office @ (712) 841-4476.

Any items for our Sunday bulletin need to be submitted to the church office @ (712) 841-4476 or methodist@laurensumc.org by 9 A.M. Friday morning. Any items for our weekly church *newsletter* need to be submitted by 9 a.m. on Monday mornings. Thank you for your cooperation.

Contact information:

Rev. Jim Davis: Pastor's Cell phone: 319-321-1705

Pastor's Email: eyeowaypastor@gmail.com

Sue Jarvis, Administrative Assistant: Office (712) 841-4476

Email: methodist@laurensumc.org

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