



## Monthly Newsletter

### April 2026

Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Check us out on our web site [www.monticelloumc.com](http://www.monticelloumc.com)

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### *From Pastor Anne:*

As I sit writing this, it is Tuesday of Holy Week and I am thinking about the services we are about to have for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and of course Easter Sunday. Each year for the past four decades I have helped the people of God celebrate the central mysteries of our faith and we've done it in so many different ways! The variations and changes in Holy Week services down through the centuries is a fascinating area of study. No other aspect of the church's worship has been as tweaked, adjusted, reformed, revived, and disrupted.

This year we will join together with our brothers & sisters in Christ of the Cisco United Methodist Church for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The Maundy Thursday service will be held April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Cisco church and will include an opportunity to participate in footwashing, and a sung celebration of Holy Communion (don't worry – printed music will be provided.)

Good Friday will be observed on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Monticello church, and will include a full reading of the Passion of Christ according to John, and the *Improperia*, which is an ancient meditation upon the cross of Christ.

Easter Sunday will see both congregations back in their separate buildings. We will hold services according to our usual schedule: 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

I hope to see you there!

## *In Sympathy for...*

...the family and friends of Jerry Geisler, who passed away on Sunday, March 1st. A memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, March 14, 2026 at the Mackey-Wright Funeral Home. Interment was in Monticello Township Cemetery.

...the family and friends of Paula Heath, who passed away on Saturday, March 28, 2026. Visitation will be held from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, with funeral service to follow.

## *W.A.T.Ch. Meals*

- April 1 - Sloppy Joes, seasoned potato wedges, buttered corn, Chocolate Thunder Cake
- April 8 - CANCELLED DUE TO NO REFRIGERATION
- April 15 - Meat loaf, mashed potatoes 'n' gravy, candied carrots cheesy biscuits, applesauce cake
- April 22 - Chicken 'n' Noodles, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, rolls chocolate Eclairs
- April 29 - Salisbury Steak, macaroni 'n' cheese, stir fried vegetables, rolls, lemonade cake

## *It's Scholarship time!*

Each year this congregation awards scholarships to people who are planning to devote their lives to the service of humanity.

- *The Kathryn Valentine Scholarship* is awarded to a Monticello High School graduate who intends to major in the field of education in his or her undergraduate study.
- *The Local Emma and Dick O'Dell Scholarship Fund* awards those who are studying to enter an area of ministry of the United Methodist Church, such as Ordained Clergy or Ministers of Christian Education, Music, or Youth. If there are no applicants planning on entering the ministry, the O'Dell Scholarship Fund can make awards to students in the fields of health care, teaching, or social work.

Those who have previously received Valentine or O'Dell scholarships are welcome to re-apply for a second year. Look for information on these this month at the Welcome Center. The application deadline is June 1st. For the Valentine there is an application for but for the O'Dell a letter from the applicant is all that is required. The Monticello Schools have been provided this information as well. Scholarship recipients will be notified by letter in late July and will be awarded at worship service in August.



Also, you are invited to make a contribution to a scholarship fund which has been established in the name of our late Youth Director, Natalie McDowell. Checks made out to *The Natalie Mauck McDowell Nursing Scholarship* may be sent to the Monticello Area Education Fund at P. O. Box 473, Monticello, IL 61853.

## *Music Ministry*

The cold weather is subsiding and warmer temps are approaching! As we head into spring, there's a natural sense of change in the air—longer days, warmer weather, and a little more light in our routines. You can feel that same shift in the music at church, too. Some Sundays it's a familiar hymn that everyone knows by heart, and other weeks it's something a little different, but it all comes together to support our worship in a simple and meaningful way.

One of the things that makes our music ministry special is that it's not about perfection - it's about participation. Whether it's the Sanctuary Choir, New Day, the Handbell Choir, Those Guys, our children's choir, a small group, or someone sharing a solo - each person adds something unique. And honestly, that's what people notice most: not how polished it is, but how genuine it feels.

As we get closer to summer, our schedule will start to loosen up a bit. Choir rehearsals will take their summer hiatus, and we will often rely on individuals or small groups to help lead music on Sundays. That makes this a great time to step in if you've ever thought about being involved but weren't sure where to start. There's a little more flexibility and plenty of room to try.

And if you're new - or just haven't joined in before - please know you're always welcome. You don't need to read music or have a lot of experience. If you enjoy singing (or playing, or ringing), there's a place for you here.

If you've been sitting in the pews thinking, "Maybe someday," this could be that time. We'd be glad to have you join us, even just to try it out. Music has a unique power to unite us, uplift us, and carry our prayers when words alone are not enough. As we move through this season of renewal and into the slower pace of summer, we invite you to listen, to sing, and perhaps to join in making a joyful noise together.

If you are interested in becoming part of the music ministry or would like more information, please reach out—we would love to welcome you.

Let everything that has life and breath praise the Lord!

## *Hospitality*

*“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” ~Hebrews 13:2*

Welcoming the stranger with glad and generous hearts is a virtue that Christians have cultivated from the very beginning. Our church's Hospitality Committee has big plans in store to help us all become more intentional in reaching out to those who come to visit our church. Be here on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> for Hospitality Sunday to learn more.

## *Outreach News*

We have received grateful thank-yous from both Hope on 5th and K9s for Warriors for our giving tree donations. The committee was even able to add to the gifts to those missions with leftover 2025 budgeted mission funds. Thank you for your Giving Tree donations!

In other news, this month we are reaching out to local schools to let them know that we are a drop-off point for school collections of donated gently used school supplies for Midwest Mission.

## *Kids and Family Ministry*

Vacation Bible School 2026 is in the works! The dates are July 13-17th with a pool party the night of the 17th. Our theme this year is “Rainforest Falls”. More information will come later regarding registration. If you are interested in volunteering, we would love to have you!

Graduate Honor Day -If you want to recognize someone from our church family that's graduating 8th grade, high school or college this year, please email or call the office with their information (name, where from, future plans, etc.) by April 30th so they can be recognized on Sunday, May 17. 762-2579, [office@monticelloumc.com](mailto:office@monticelloumc.com)

## *Youth Ministry*

April is here! This will be our last full month of youth group for the school year. It is crazy how fast this year has gone by. Each week at youth group, we do a lesson. A lesson that will help our youth grow closer in their relationship with Christ. In June, 15 youth and 5 adult leaders will spend a week in Charleston, SC. We will spend this week not only serving the people of Charleston, but also focusing on growing our relationship with Christ.

## *Fun & Fellowship News*

Two great Fellowship events in one March weekend. Saturday the 28th was our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Great weather, games, snacks and, of course, a mad dash for eggs. The Easter

Bunny was there for photo ops as well. The next day our church family all came together for combined 5th Sunday worship on Palm Sunday. As you see, a great time was had by all!

Thanks Fun & Fellowship committee and all others who helped with these events!

This month we will have our “Seniors Prom” event for 55 & overs on Saturday, April 18. Don’t forget to RSVP at the Welcome Center for this dinner and dancing affair!



### **Typical Weekly events:**

Worship Services, Sunday at 8:30 and at 10:45, with Sunday School in between at 9:45.

T.O.P.S., Monday, 4 pm

Food Pantry, Tu & Th 12:45-3 pm, Wednesday, 5:30-7 pm

Boy Scouts, Monday, 7 pm (if school is in session)

Mat Weaving for Midwest Missions - Every third Monday of the month at 9 am

“Just Walking” - Tu & Th, 8:30 am - Half hour devotional followed by indoor walking

Bible Study Wednesdays, 1:15 pm

W.A.T.Ch. Meals - Wed, 5 pm (September through mid-May)

Sanctuary Choir rehearsals, Wed, 6 pm; Bell Choir & New Day rehearsals -Wed, 7pm\*

Youth Group, Sunday, 5-7:15 pm; mid August through mid-May

Summer Singers - Thursdays at 6:30 pm, June through mid-August

\*(Sanctuary Choir and New Day take rehearsal hiatus June through August)

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#### **Thursday, April 3**

Maundy Thursday Service, 7 pm

Cisco UMC

#### **Friday April 4**

Good Friday Service, 7 pm

#### **Sunday, April 5 - Easter Sunday**

Normal service schedule,

8:30 am and 10:45 am

#### **April 8 - April 15**

Pastor Anne's vacation

#### **Saturday, April 11**

4H Extension Leadership mtg, 10 am

#### **Saturday, April 18**

Seniors Prom, 4:30 pm

#### **Sunday, April 19**

Honoring Mary Ellen Dean  
at Worship Service

#### **Thursday, April 23**

Midwest Mission - all day

#### **Saturday, April 25**

Willow Tree Trivia Night, 5 pm

#### **Sunday, April 26**

Hospitality Sunday  
at Worship Services

#### **Friday, May 1**

Faith in Action  
Appreciation Breakfast