

DECEMBER 2024

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The monthly newsletter of Brown St. & Congress St. UMCs

## NOT WHAT YOU HOPED FOR

By Pastor Ryan

### IN THIS ISSUE

What's Happening at  
Brown St. & Congress St.  
Christmas Worship  
Murdock Family Dinner

Have you ever really really wanted something for Christmas...and then not gotten it? I know that it isn't the most cheerful thing to think about in this season of mirth and merriment, but it seems like a fairly universal experience, doesn't it?

As my kids get older and their tastes change, it has been harder to keep up with the things they like in a world where some things are "fire" one minute and lame the next. ("Fire" is Gen Z slang for cool; I looked it up.) Last year, I saw a brief expression of disappointment pass over one of my daughter's faces as she unwrapped something - something that just months before I was sure she would love, but now was not her style. She said thank you, and that she loved it, but I know how she felt. We all do, right? Sometimes things just aren't what we hoped for.

As we get older, sometimes feeling disappointed at Christmas isn't about gifts. Just like my daughters' tastes change with a rapid moving world, life brings change. Our family units don't look like they used to. We grieve the loss of people we wish were still around, and we find ways to incorporate "adopted" members of the family we never expected to be in our holiday photos. Long held family traditions sometimes have to change, adjust, or even be left behind for new traditions.

And with all that change and potential to feel disappointed, it could be very easy to sink into an attitude of cynicism. It could be very easy - when we don't experience what we want to experience, or feel how we want to feel - to start to insist that everything is bad, that things used to be perfect, or better, and become the kind of person who is angry and sad about everything and everyone. A real Scrooge, if you will.

I really do understand it. My life doesn't look exactly how I thought it would even 10 years ago. I share my children 50/50 with their mom, and we take turns having the girls for Christmas Eve/morning. This year is her turn. It is really hard, and it can feel sad. I am finding that it is important for me to be able to identify that - to be honest about what feels hard or disappointing. But it is just as important for me to not be consumed by those feelings.

Once I've named the big feelings, usually in prayer before God, I have found that a practice of gratitude helps to put things in perspective. Life is very difficult sometimes, that is true, but I also have a lot of examples of life being truly beautiful. One of the many things I am grateful for this year is to be able to celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmastide with all of you, two congregations who continue to find ways to adjust and work together in an ever changing world.

Christmas together has been different every year for the last few years, which can be hard as we learn to live in this ever changing world. But, how fortunate are we to get to worship God together?

I don't presume to know everyone's circumstances or feelings this season, whether about worshiping together, gifts, or family time. But I do know that amidst the disappointment and the joy, the different and the same, there is a lot to be grateful for, even if it isn't what we were hoping for. As we prepare our hearts for Jesus, during Advent, I invite you to name your feelings, whatever they might be, and practice gratitude. What are you grateful for this year?

# What's Happening in Our Community

## JUBILEE CHRISTMAS

### General Information:

On **Saturday, Dec. 14th**, Congress Street and Brown Street will host 10 families in the Fellowship Hall at Congress Street.

The sign up for ways to help are in the chapel at Brown Street and the parlor at Congress Street.

### Ways to Help:

**Set-Up:** Friday, Dec. 13th , 5:00pm-8:00pm

**Meet and Greet:** Saturday, Dec. 14th, 12pm-1pm

**Food Service:** Saturday, Dec. 14th , 12pm-3pm

**Host a Family:** Saturday, Dec. 14th, 12:30pm-3:00pm

**Clean up:** Saturday, Dec. 14th, 2:30-3:30

## CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

**Longest Night:** 12/21, 5pm @ Congress Street

**Family Dinner:** 12/24, 5pm @ Brown Street

**Christmas Eve Worship:** 12/24, 6pm @ Brown Street

**Christmas Eve Worship:** 12/24, 7pm @ Congress Street

**Joint Worship/Hymn Sing:** 12/29, 10:30am @ Congress Street

**Wesleyan Covenant Renewal:** 1/5, 9am @ Brown Street,  
10:30am @ Congress Street

## 2025 DIRECTORY

We are collecting information for a **2025 directory!** Even if nothing has changed, please take a moment to fill out one of the slips outside the sanctuary and place them in the basket! **The deadline for the directory is Sunday, December 15,** but if your information changes after that, please let us know so we can stay connected!

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

18 - Amos Ohlemiller (CS)

19 - Mike Johnson (CS)

31 - Carolyn Dexter (CS)

31 - Brenda King (CS)

## DECEMBER OFFICE HOURS

The hours listed below are the hours Maia is in the office. Pastor Ryan is in and out. If you need to meet with him, please reach out to him or Maia to schedule a time!

### Brown Street:

Tuesdays: 10am - 4:30pm

### Congress Street:

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 10am - 4pm

Fridays: Flexible

Pastor Ryan's days off are Friday & Saturday.

Maia's days off are Monday & Saturday.

**The office will be closed on December 12, and December 25 - January 1 for Christmas.**

# What's Happening in Our Community

## SHARE YOUR STORY IN THE NEWSLETTER!

If you feel compelled to share your story - or a meditation or devotion on scripture - we'd love to give you a place to do it! Reach out to Maia either at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org) or talk to her after worship on a Sunday.

She can interview you and write something up, edit your own words (we do have limited space, unfortunately), or something else. Whatever would be helpful to you!

## MURDOCK ELEMENTARY FAMILY DINNER

**On Thursday, 12/12, from 5:00pm - 7:00pm**, Brown Street will be providing dinner and games for Murdock Elementary School's monthly Family Dinner/Activities. We would love to have Congress Street folks join us! **If you are willing to help serve the meal or run an activity station, please let Maia know at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org) by Friday, 12/6!**

### Schedule:

Rotation 1: 5:30pm - 6:15pm

Group A - Dinner

Group B - Games

Rotation 2: 6:15pm - 7pm

Group A - Games

Group B - Dinner

**Menu:** Biscuits & gravy, fruit

### Volunteers Needed:

14 to lead games/activities (instructions will be sent out in advance; all materials will be provided.)

6 to serve the meal

## What's Happening at



## MONTHLY MISSION: JUBILEE CHRISTMAS

Each Christmas, churches around Lafayette partner with Lafayette Urban Ministry to provide Christmas for families in need. This year, Brown Street and Congress Street will be working together. If you would like to contribute monetarily, mark your envelope "mission" and place it in the collection plate on Sunday morning or write "mission" in the memo line at [brownstumc.org/give](http://brownstumc.org/give).

## FAMILY DINNER

**Tuesdays**

**Kids @ 4:30pm | Doors @ 5:00pm**

**Dinner @ 5:30pm**

**Dining Room:** We need people to participate in communities around the table, either by hosting tables or just being present. If you're willing, please plan to arrive around 4:30pm on Tuesdays.

**Kitchen:** If you are interested in helping prepare the meal, set up, or clean up, we could always use your help! Reach out to Justin Henry at [just.t.henry@gmail.com](mailto:just.t.henry@gmail.com) to volunteer.

## What's Happening at



**CONGRESS ST.**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## CIRCLE OF JOY CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Monday, 12/9 at 6:00pm, Market Square Arni's**  
Everyone will be responsible for their own meal. Also we are collecting gloves (mittens) and hats for the winter to support Lafayette Urban Ministry. As usual we will be exchanging Christmas Cards.

## UWF BAKE SALE

**Sunday, 12/8, Parlor**

It will be a free will offering for the baked goodies. The money from this project goes to support the Christmas Jubilee which is on Saturday, December 14th. Please be generous in your baked items as this is one of our mission projects. Merry Christmas!

## BALANCE & FALL PREVENTION CLASS

**Mondays @ 1:00pm through 4/14**

This free class, led by a physical therapist, walks you through different exercises to help improve your balance. All are welcome and encouraged to do what they are able to do. Questions? Contact Lynn Nelson at [nelson@cosumc.org](mailto:nelson@cosumc.org) or 765-491-7856.

## OPEN TABLE MEAL & CAROLING!

### DECEMBER MEAL INFORMATION

**Date: Sunday, 12/22 after worship!**

No delivery this month: we will carol through or neighborhood and deliver a Christmas treat to those homes that have participated regularly in the community meal program. We will have a light meal together after! Everyone is welcome!

**If you can donate Christmas treats to give to our neighbors**, please reach out to Chad Johnson at [chadj@purdue.edu](mailto:chadj@purdue.edu).

## POINSETTIAS

**\$10 each, orders due Sunday, 12/22**

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory or in honor of someone, complete the order form outside of the sanctuary, attach your payment (mark your check 'poinsettia'), and return to the collection plates! Questions? See Dolores Flynn!



### **BROWN STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Charis Vander Plaats  
Director of Worship

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

### **CONTACT BROWN STREET**

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### **CONTACT CONGRESS STREET**

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### **CONGRESS STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Jake Ohlemiller  
Pastor of Worship Arts

Rick Puckett  
Pastor of Visitation

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

Shane & Teri Lynch  
Custodians

## **WORSHIP WITH US**

**Sundays at 9am - Brown Street**

[www.facebook.com/BrownStreetUnitedMethodistChurch](http://www.facebook.com/BrownStreetUnitedMethodistChurch)

**Sundays at 10:30am - Congress Street**

[www.facebook.com/evolvingfollowers](http://www.facebook.com/evolvingfollowers)

**If you are able and interested in receiving this newsletter via email,  
reach out to Maia at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org).**

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