

JANUARY 2025

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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

## RECOMMIT

By Maia Gibson

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Every year around December, I experience this desire to reflect and take stock of the year I just lived. It's often coupled with the desire to look ahead at the next year, where I want to go, what I want to do, who I want to be. So I give into it. I reflect, often finding areas of myself or my life that are lacking and then set a goal to try and fix them the next year. Didn't exercise enough in 2024? Guess I'll make a goal to do yoga every day in 2025. Didn't take enough risks in 2024? Guess I'll make a list of bold, brave things I can do in 2025 and check 'em off one by one.

I'm already tired just thinking about it. I'm already beating myself up for the morning of yoga I'll miss because I had a fever and the risk I won't get around to taking because who wants to strike up a random conversation with a stranger in a coffee shop anyway? Which is probably why this whole New Year's Resolution thing doesn't work, for me at least. There's no grace. There's no consideration for the things I'm already doing or already have. Just a need to be better. To do more. To continue fixing what is broken like I am a never-ending to-do list instead of a person.

So I'm not doing any of that this year.

When I sat down to reflect on 2024, I found myself making a list of all the things, people, and experiences I have to be grateful for. The things I learned, the ways I changed. All of which I would like to keep with me, keep working at in 2025. All of them will take effort, require me to consistently take a hard look at myself in the mirror, make changes, and challenge me. I don't need to add more. I don't want to add more.

But it took a reminder of all of these things in my life for me to decide to recommit to them. It would've been so easy to continue on with what I've always done. It would've been so easy to get swept up in the day-to-day or what everyone else is doing. I needed that reminder. I think we all do.

Which is why we continue to do a Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service at the start of the year. The service reminds us of the love and grace we receive each and every day. It reminds us of the covenant we committed to when we were baptized or confirmed or joined the church: our promise to be disciples of Jesus, to "faithfully participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness." It gives us the opportunity to recommit to living this way, to prioritize loving God and loving our neighbor over everything else.

You don't necessarily need to do more. You don't need to run out and buy a new guide to read the Bible in a year or sign up for every opportunity to serve that's offered on this side of the Wabash. But maybe you do need to recommit to what you're already trying to do. Maybe you need to prioritize time with God every day, whatever that looks like to you. Maybe you need to help serve at Family Dinner or our Open Table Meals. Maybe you need to take advantage of the opportunities that are coming this year to practice spiritual disciplines and participate in our community.

Instead of making a resolution to do a new thing this year, I encourage you to make a recommitment to the things that are already life-giving that tend to get pushed aside. What is one thing you would like to carry with you and continue working at in 2025?

# What's Happening in Our Community

## WESLEYAN COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,  
praised for you or criticized for you.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.

And now, O wonderful and Holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are  
mine, and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven.

Amen.

## 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, or something else. Whatever would be helpful to you!



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

3 - John DeLuca (CS)  
4 - Caroline Briggs (CS)  
8 - Sirena Conway (CS)  
15 - Anthony Hulbert (CS)  
17 - Milayna Conway (CS) 18 - Pearl McClannen (BS)  
17 - Danielle Graf (CS) 18 - Rex Sage (CS)  
17 - Chris LeFevre (CS) 19 - Chuck Newton (CS)  
23 - Chuck Cochran (CS)  
24 - Vickie Hardesty (BS)  
26 - Lynn Nelson (CS)  
27 - Amy Baumis (BS)

### JANUARY 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.

# Spiritual Disciplines

Sundays from 1/19 - 3/2

11:45am - 1:00pm @ Congress Street

Winter can be a really difficult time to find the motivation to do much of anything. The days are short, the nights are long, and the weather is often colder than we would like. For some of us, it can be a really difficult time spiritually and mentally.

Starting on January 19th, we will try something new.

For seven weeks (1/19-3/2) we will gather together after Congress Street's worship for a meal, then split off into small groups to explore spiritual practices together.

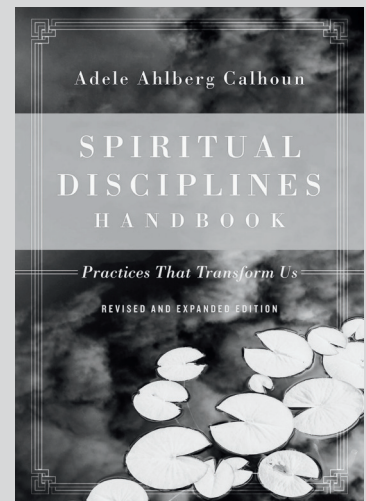
Children/youth will have their own spaces to explore scripture and prayer. Adults will have a space to learn about and practice some spiritual disciplines in the company of loving community. This opportunity is for Brown Street, Congress Street, and our neighbors and wider community.

In this season, we hope you'll join us as we stick together in the dark and cold, learning new ways to improve our constant connection to God.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES HANDBOOK

Throughout this series, we will be following the practices in Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*. The book gives directions and practical, accessible guidance for practicing a variety of spiritual disciplines, everything from sabbath to discernment to witness to a variety of forms of prayer.

To order a copy, please email Maia at [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org) or [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org). Each copy will be \$15. Please mark your payment "Spiritual Disciplines Book" and place it in the offering plate at either church. Checks can be made payable to Congress Street UMC. (And if \$15 is out of your price range, we can cover the cost of your book!)



## WAYS TO HELP

**Meal Coordination:** If you are willing to help set the menu and purchase/prepare food for one of the meals, we could use help on the following dates: 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23. The meal doesn't need to be complicated - sandwiches would be fine - and Congress Street's grant money can be used for food purchases! To sign up, email Maia at [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org) or [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org).

## What's Happening at



## MONTHLY MISSIONS 2025

### January

TCU Food Pantry

### February

Care Fund

### March

Brown St. UMC Gardens

### April

Family Dinner

### May

TCU Food Pantry

### June

Care Fund

### July

Home with Hope

### August

TCU Food Pantry

### September

Care Fund

### October

Family Dinner

### November

Jubilee Christmas

### December

Home with Hope

## MONTHLY MISSION: FOOD PANTRY

The Tippecanoe United Church Food Pantry provides food, hygiene items, and other necessities to those in need in our community. To donate toward the TCU Food Pantry, 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**

We could always use your help! Kitchen prep begins around 3:00pm and Table Hosts huddle at 4:45pm each week. Come help prepare/serve food, be Jesus to our neighbors around the table, and wash dishes! All are welcome!

## DE-DECORATING

**Tuesday, 1/7 @ 6:15pm (end of Family Dinner)**

Join us for dinner and then help us put away our Christmas decorations! All are welcome!

## CIRCLE OF JOY

The Circle of Joy will NOT meet in January. The next regular meeting will be on Monday, February 10th!

## YWCA DONATIONS

The United Women in Faith will be collecting items for the Women's Shelter at the YWCA. The list of needed items is posted on bulletin boards around the church. Please put the items in the wicker basket in the parlor during January. Questions? See Ellen Barker.

## ACOLYTES

If your child would like to serve in worship as an acolyte, please sign up on the sheet in the parlor! Training will be provided. Contact Lynn Nelson or Jan Johnson with questions!

## DE-DECORATING

**Wednesday, 1/8, 1:00pm**

Swing by after Pizza with the Pastor to help us put away our Christmas decorations!

## What's Happening at



## 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.

### **BROWN STREET STAFF**

Ryan Traeger  
Pastor

Charis Vander Plaats  
Director of Worship

Maia Gibson  
Administrative Assistant

### **CONTACT BROWN STREET**

905 Brown St.  
Lafayette, IN 47904  
765-742-1316  
info@brownstreetumc.org  
www.brownstumc.org

### **CONTACT CONGRESS STREET**

2010 Congress St.  
Lafayette, IN 47905  
765-447-4158  
info@cosumc.org  
www.cosumc.org

### **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).**

Congress St. UMC  
2010 Congress St.  
Lafayette, IN 47905