

A Note from the Pastor

The Power of Words

"And God said…" Genesis 1:3a

Several years ago, Juliana gave me an echo dot for Christmas. I have mostly used it for a morning alarm and to listen to the day's weather forecast. Last week I purchased the "smart plugs" for the lamps in our home. They are tied into our Alexa Echo Dot. This allows me to turn lights on and off with an app on my phone, or if I am within voice range of my Echo Dot, all I have to say is "Alexa, turn off the lights!" and the lights automatically turn off. Our dogs have finally gotten used to the lights going on and off seemingly all by themselves with only a word from Juliana or myself.

This new "power" has led me to reflect on this passage from Genesis 1 where nothing exists until God says, "Let there be light." The writer of Genesis then tells us that light was created and that God saw that it was good. What amazing power! Only four words are spoken and the beginning of all creation was started. What awesome power is in God's word!

Have you ever thought about the power in your own words? I remember as a child hearing the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Although that is a great sentiment, I feel it is far from the truth. I have seen words used to tear a person apart. Our words can hurt someone very deeply. It is especially painful when weaponized words come from a loved one or trusted friend. Gossip can hurt, especially when what is said is not even true.

But words can also be used to build a person up. Jesus constantly talked with those who were outcast and thought to be sinners. He offered words of forgiveness and hope not condemnation and shame. People were changed by what Jesus told them. Then they went forth and told others about what Jesus had said and done!

We live in a culture that is deeply divided and uses words to hurt and divide. As members of the Christian community, we have a responsibility to respond to the world as Jesus would. We are a witness to what God is doing in the world with every word we speak. My hope and prayer is that my words may be words of invitation for the lost to know the love and grace of Jesus Christ. There is power in those words!

I look forward to seeing you in Church!
Pastor Bob

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER UPDATE BEGINNING IN 2027

Beginning in 2027 only individuals that have contacted the church office and verified a current mailing address will continue to receive a mailed copy of the monthly newsletter. We encourage our Church family to consider an e-mailed version to enjoy a full color copy while reducing printing and mailing expenses for the Church. We will happily mail you a paper copy, however you need to contact the Church office at 309-543-4725 and ask to remain on the paper version mailing list. We also encourage you to contact the church office to provide an e-mail address as an alternative. Paper copies will also be available each month in the sanctuary for pickup. Contact the church office by December 31st!!!

The Messenger
United Methodist Church
Havana/Oakford
December 2026

United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith PURPOSE is to be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in global ministries of the church. All women are invited to be a part of this Christian Fellowship.

United Women in Faith will meet on **Wednesday, December 2nd at Noon** for a Christmas Party at Los Charros Restaurant. We will order off the menu. There will be a short business meeting followed by a white elephant gift exchange.

All women of our church and their friends are invited to join. This is a great organization providing a lot of excellent services to our church.

Oakford UMC Backpack & School Supply Restock Sunday January 17, 2027



Our schools are halfway through the school year and need additional backpacks and school supplies to help students finish the year strong!

As you do your Christmas shopping, please consider picking up some much-needed school supplies and backpacks. Your generosity will help provide students with the tools they need for the remainder of the school year.

Thank you for your continued support!

CHRONOLOGICAL READING OF THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

December 2025

12/1/2026	Rom 12-15
12/2/2026	Rom 16; 1 Corinthians 1-3
12/3/2026	1 Co 4-7
12/4/2026	1 Co 8-11
12/5/2026	1 Co 12-14
12/6/2026	1 Co 15-16; 2 Co 1
12/7/2026	2 Co 2-6
12/8/2026	2 Co 7-10
12/9/2026	2 Co 11-13; Gal 1-2
12/10/2026	Galatians 3-5
12/11/2026	Gal 6; Eph 1-4
12/12/2026	Eph 5-6; Phil 1
12/13/2026	Philippians 2-4; Colossians 1
12/14/2026	Col 2-4; 1 Thessalonians 1-2
12/15/2026	1 Thessalonians 3-5; 2 Thessalonians 1-3
12/16/2026	1 Timothy 1-6
12/17/2026	2 Ti 1-4; Titus 1
12/18/2026	Titus 2-3; Philemon; Hebrews 1-3
12/19/2026	Heb 4-8
12/20/2026	Heb 9-10
12/21/2026	Heb 11-13; Jam 1
12/22/2026	James 2-5
12/23/2026	1 Peter 1-5
12/24/2026	2 Pe 1-3; 1 John 1
12/25/2026	1 John 2-5
12/26/2026	2 John; 3 John; Jude; Revelation 1-2
12/27/2026	Rev 3-6
12/28/2026	Rev 7-10
12/29/2026	Rev 11-15
12/30/2026	Rev 16-18
12/31/2026	Rev 19-22



Havana FUMC
"Crochet 4 Christ"
December 18th
10:00 a.m.

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December Missions

Adult Mission Offering
Red Bird Mission

The Red Bird Mission has been providing ministries in this region of the Appalachian Mountains since 1921. Today the need remains critical in this isolated, rural distressed area. Chronic poverty, lack of jobs, poor housing, and rugged mountainous terrain provide obstacles to a fuller life for the residents of this area. Red Bird Mission and Clinic strives to meet these needs through ministry in five areas: Education, Health and Wellness, Community Outreach, Economic Opportunity, and Community Housing Improvement.

Children Mission Offering
Liberia Scholarship

This months mission offering will go to the Liberia Scholarship Fund. We have been supporting 30 students ($200 for each student) at the Tubman Gray United Methodist School in Liberia for several years. Each scholarship provides for school uniforms, supplies and teacher salary assistance. You may make a one time gift of any amount, give $200 for a scholarship or make a pledge and give what you can through the year.

DECEMBER USHERS



Mike & Phyllis Hedden
Zach Marshall

Sharing Our Blessings with Others for October 2026
Havana
Total Mission $5,832.72

Adult Mission:
World Communion Sunday
$80.00

Children Mission: UNICEF
$252.72

Toy Give Away $5,500.00

Thank you for your generosity throughout the year to support our Mission Projects!!

Community Food Pantry
December Item:



Tissues of any brand

Please help us re-supply our Food Pantry by donating the above product.

(Box located outside of Sanctuary)



No Communion will be served on December 6th. Communion will be served December 24th.

Oakford UMC Advent

Hanging of the Greens
Sunday, November 29, 8:30 a.m.

Guest Speaker James Fielder, DS
December 6, 8:30 a.m.

Children's Choir
December 13, 8:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve
Thursday, December 24
8:00 p.m. Candlelight
Communion Service &
Live Nativity

Baby Jesus Birthday Party
Epiphany Sunday
January 3, 2027, 8:30 a.m.

Havana First UMC Advent

Hanging of the Greens
Sunday, November 29, 10:30 a.m.

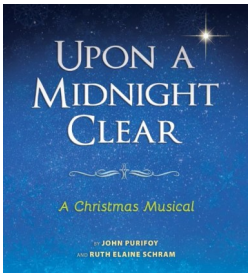
Christmas Cantata & Guest Speaker Rev. James Fielder, DS
Soup Luncheon to follow worship
December 6, 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve
5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
11:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service

Christmas Decorations Take Down
January 10, 2:00 p.m.

Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF)
Grades 5 through 12—New Name!
MYF will now be known as **IGNITE Youth Ministry**!
We want to **IGNITE** our Faith in Jesus Christ!
We want to **IGNITE** our Passion to serve others in Jesus' name!
We want to **IGNITE** our Interests in reading and understanding the Bible!
We want to **IGNITE** our Desire to spend time with God in worship and in prayer!

New Day and Time!
With a new name comes a new day and time to meet!
IGNITE will meet the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month during the school year from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the church. On the 3rd Sunday of the month we will plan to do something off campus so those times will vary. Watch the newsletter for when those activities are scheduled.
IGNITE will not meet the 1st Sunday of the month so that youth may have a Sunday evening with their families once a month.
Although a meal will not be a part of the plan for most gatherings, snacks and drinks will be provided each week unless specified.



Havana FUMC
Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 6th
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Soup Luncheon to follow

November Birthdays and Anniversaries

Havana FUMC

Birthdays

Dec 2	Andrea Gamble
Dec 4	Darrin Walker
Dec 5	Collin Wilcoxen
Dec 7	Scott Dietsch
Dec 8	Cori Lippert
Dec 9	Richard Lounsberry
Dec 11	Trey Bergman
Dec 11	Kaleb Layton
Dec 12	Donna Sarff
Dec 13	Jennifer (Daniel) Price
Dec 16	Kaitlyn Strauman
Dec 17	Riki Layton
Dec 17	Eli Sheets
Dec 18	Carys Daniel
Dec 19	Susie Bearce
Dec 20	Don Clancy
Dec 20	Ramona Pfeiffer
Dec 20	Carol Walker
Dec 20	Andrew Brooks
Dec 21	Lillie Smith
Dec 22	Cheris Beaty
Dec 22	Sarah Silva
Dec 22	Judy Roch
Dec 25	Denice Ray
Dec 28	Alex Clancy
Dec 29	Jason Layton
Dec 30	Rita Badger

Anniversaries

12/05/1971 Dennis & Kris Skaggs
12/10/1989 Graham & Kay Curtis
12/26/1968 Ed and Jenny Edwards
12/27/1969 Larry & Connie Montgomery
12/29/1995 Victor & Christina Oney
12/31/2023 Darrin & Charity Walker



Oakford UMC

Birthdays

Dec 1	Stihl Chalmers
Dec 2	Shirley McCandless
Dec 6	Lori Hill
Dec 7	Sarah Riley
Dec 8	Susan Short
Dec 10	Jayden McGinnis
Dec 10	Bryce Monroe
Dec 12	Clayton Trueblood
Dec 15	Justin Brooks
Dec 16	Lisa Wilhoit
Dec 17	Wes Boensel
Dec 24	Gary French
Dec 27	Jane Rebbe
Dec 27	Neal Norris
Dec 28	Chris Stone
Dec 31	Myra McGinnis



Anniversaries

12/11/1993 Matt & Becky Duncheon

Rev. Bob Herath
Office Hours
Havana
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
9:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Other hours by appointment
309-252-1136

Thank You!

Thank you for the generous Pastor's Appreciation gifts. Juliana and I are blessed to have such a warm and welcoming congregation to lead. Thank you — Pastor Bob Herath

2027 Newsletter Sponsors
Reserve Your Month Now!

- You can do so in honor of a loved one, for a celebration or simply to support the ministry.
- Cost: $60.00
- Contact the church office to reserve your month today!

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Havana/Oakford
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DECEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SunCatcherStudio.com

Upcoming Calendar of Events

for **Both** Churches

Every Sunday:
8:30 a.m. - Oakford UMC Worship
10:30 a.m. - Havana FUMC Worship

Day	Time	Weekly Events
12/01	11:00 a.m.	Retired Teachers
12/02	12:00 p.m.	UWF Meeting @ Los Charros
12/06	10:30 a.m.	Havana Christmas Cantata Guest Speaker, Rev. James Fielder Soup Lunch to Follow Worship
12/07	6:30 p.m.	Mission Committee
12/08	6:30 a.m.	Finance Meeting
12/12	8:00 a.m.	Toy Give Away
12/17	1:30 p.m.	Cancer Support Group
12/19	10:00 a.m.	"Crochet 4 Christ"
12/22	6:00 p.m.	Trustee Meeting
12/24		Church Office Closed
12/24	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service
	8:00 p.m.	Oakford Candlelight Service
	11:00 p.m.	Havana Candlelight Service
12/31		Church Office Closed

CHOIR
December 2nd,16th & 30th
@ 6:00 p.m.

IGNITE (MYF)
December 6th Family night

December 13th **4:30 to 6 p.m.**
Ignite Christmas Party at the Church
Devotion: Spiritual Growth

December 20th and 27th
No Ignite (Christmas Break)



Weekly Prayer Topics
December 2026

December 6 **Pray for students who are taking final exams.**
"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9

December 13 **Pray for Foster Parents.**
"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." - Galatians 6:2

December 20 **Pray for those who have lost a loved one this year.**
"Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted."- Isaiah 49:13

December 27 **Pray for rest.**
"The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
Exodus 33:14



Havana December Acolyte Schedule

December 6th: *Davis Snedeker*
December 13th: *Ella Strauman*
December 20th*: Madelynn Snedeker*
December 27th: *Emma Strauman*

If you are unable to Acolyte, please trade with someone and let the church office know either by calling or sending us an email!!

Remember Our Shut-Ins



Arcadia Care at Havana
609 N Harpham, Havana 62644
Colleen Wolters

Clayberg Nursing Center
625 E Monroe St, Cuba 61427
Rosie Moore

Lodge at Manito
1303 S. East Ave, Manito 61546
Shirley Lynn Apt 109
Mary Lou Stephens Apt. 129

Independence Village
1201 W Northmoor Rd,, Peoria IL 61614
Portia Brown Apt. 327

At Home
Beverly & Murray McKenna
629 E. Washington, Havana, IL 62644

If you are a shut-in and would like your name and address listed please call the church office to be added.

Prayer request

Juliana Herath will be undergoing back surgery on Friday December 11, 2026. She will be at home recovering for three and a half weeks over Christmas.

From December 14-19 Pastor Bob will be working from his office at the parsonage to be available to help Juliana with basic tasks. Please contact him by cell **(309)252-1136** or stop by the parsonage (**102 S Shawgo Ave**) if you need a pastor.



In Our Prayers

Havana: JoLynn Adkins; Graham and Kay Curtis; Debbie Howerter; John Intihar; Eric Parsons; Ashley Schaad; Kylie Tomm; Brenda Wolters

Oakford: Sandy Gum; Rodney King; Doug McGinnis; Rev. Murriel; Brenda Nance; Katie Nichols; Scott Smith; Tim Welch; Bill Whitley

Bishop David Bard; Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai; The Church; Our Country; Those Grieving; Those with Silent Prayers; Those not as fortunate; and……..

Mary's Office Update

Please notify the church office at: 309-543-4725 or e-mail ***office@havanaumc.org*** *of any person or persons whom you would like placed on or removed from the prayer list.*

Newsletter Deadline December 18th

Mary will be on vacation December 14th-17th. Please contact Pastor Bob if you need anything during that time.

Church Office Closed December 24th & 31st

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Havana/Oakford
December 2026

First United Methodist Church
101 S. Broadway St.
Havana, IL 62644

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The Messenger

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Published to keep the members and friends of Havana First United Methodist Church and Oakford United Methodist Church informed about its ministry within the world community. Please consider "sponsoring" a particular month by covering the mailing cost for that month. Sponsorship is $60 per month.

December Newsletter Sponsored by:

The Congregation of the Oakford United Methodist Church as we share our Christian love this Christmas season.

