

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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

## Living With Your Star Words

by Sarah McCann

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On January 4<sup>th</sup> in worship, our congregations were offered the opportunity to participate in a new year practice by receiving star words. These are a single word offered as a companion and a guide for the year ahead. Much like the star that guided the Magi to Christ, these words are not meant to give us a map, but to be an invitation. They are meant to help us notice where God may be leading, shaping, or gently nudging us in the months to come.

As Pastor Ryan reminded us, a star word can serve as a lens through which we pray, listen, and reflect in our daily spiritual practices and in our interactions in our church community. Some of us may have received words that feel immediately meaningful, while others may have received words that seem confusing or even uncomfortable. Both are okay! Often, God works slowly and subtly, revealing meaning over time through prayer, scripture, conversations, and everyday moments.

As you begin this year, consider putting your star word in a place where you see it often: at your desk, in your car, or on your bathroom mirror. You could write it down often, or simply hold it in your heart during quiet moments throughout your week.

To help you get started in your reflections, below are a few questions to use in journaling, prayer, or meditation:

- What might God be trying to teach me through this word?
- How does this word show up in my life right now?
- Where am I being invited to grow, let go, or trust more deeply in this area?
- How might this word shape the way I love God and others today?
- What feelings — joy, resistance, curiosity, hope — does this bring up in me? What else could those feelings be telling me?

It is our hope that your star word will be a gentle guide this year, drawing you deeper into prayer, awareness, and trust in God's presence along the way.

# What's Happening in Our Community

## Share your Story in the Newsletter!

Want to share your thoughts in the newsletter? We'd love to give you a place to do it! Reach out to Sarah either at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org) to brainstorm!

## 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.

## Lay Servant Classes

Interested in becoming a lay leader? Lay Servant classes are open to anyone and cover a wide variety of topics! Classes are available in person, via Zoom and hybrid.

Check out the link below to see what classes are currently available. You may attend a class sponsored by any district.

This site is updated as new classes are added.

### [Upcoming Lay Servant Classes](#)

Questions? Contact **Lynn Nelson** at  
**765-491-7856** or [nelson@cosumc.org](mailto:nelson@cosumc.org).

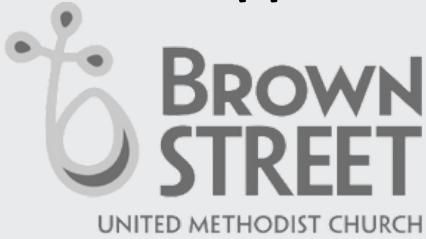
## Jubilee Christmas Thank You!

Thank you to everyone that helped make Jubilee Christmas a huge success this year. Donations were made, lists were coordinated, cookies were baked, gifts were purchased, hosts were hosting and greeters were greeting. All of this done with love for our neighbors. A special thanks to the youth that greeted our guests and moved loads of packages out to the cars. It took both churches to make this happen and even with all the snow we were able to serve our ten families.

Thank you!



# What's Happening at



## Monthly Mission: 2026

Below are our monthly missions for the year. To donate, mark your envelope "mission" and place it in the collection late on Sunday mornings.

**January** - TCU Food Pantry

**February** - Care Fund

**March** - Brown. St. 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

## Family Dinner

**Tuesdays**

**Doors @ 5:00pm**

**Dinner @ 5:30pm**

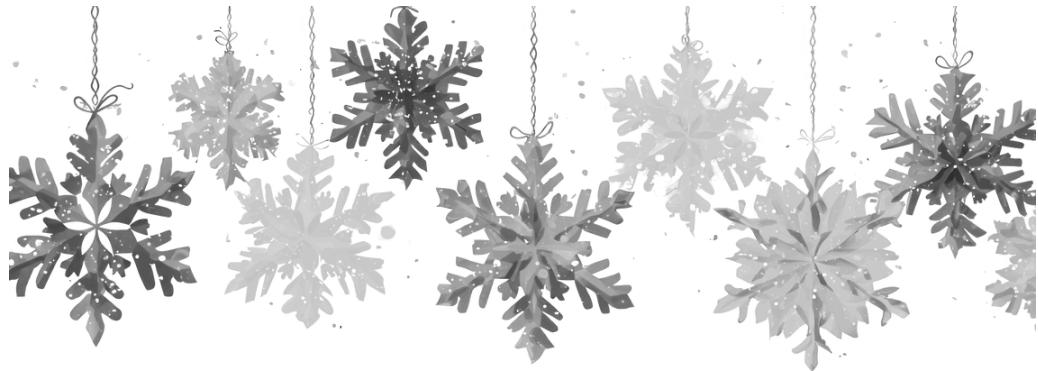
If you are interested in helping prepare the meal, set up, or clean up, we could always use your help!

We also could use help in the dining room to welcome any guests, and engage in loving conversation with neighbors--all welcome!

## De-Decorating

We will meet on **Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm** to de-decorate the sanctuary from the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Please join if you are able!



# Happy Birthday

**Pearl McClannen - Jan. 18**

**Vickie Hardesty - Jan. 24**

**Amy Johnson - Jan. 27**

# What's Happening at



**CONGRESS ST.**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Giving Envelopes

Giving envelopes are on the cabinet top in the back of the sanctuary. Feel free to take them as you wish! They are not personalized or marked with the year, and free to all.

## De-Decorating

We will meet on **Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>** at **1:30pm** to de-decorate the sanctuary from the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Please join if you are able!

## Circle of Joy Meeting

Reminder: there will be **NO Circle of Joy meeting in January**. Be on the lookout for our next meeting in the February newsletter!

## Join Us: Bingo!

**Sunday Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Join us after worship in the Fellowship hall for lunch and bingo! Prizes for all ages available! Questions or interested in helping? Contact Liz Peters at: [epeters3689@gmail.com](mailto:epeters3689@gmail.com)

## YWCA Donations

Items will be collected for YWCA's Women Shelter during the month of January. The items will be taken to the YWCA shelter on the first Friday of February.

The list of needs will be posted, a clothes basket will be in the parlor.

Questions? Contact Ellen Barker

# Happy Birthday

Caroline Briggs - Jan. 4

Sirena Conway - Jan. 8

Anthony Hulbert - Jan. 15

Milayna Conway - Jan. 17

Chris LeFevre - Jan. 17

Chuck Newton - Jan. 19

Chuck Cochran - Jan. 23

Lynn Nelson - Jan. 26

Joyce VanCleef - Jan. 27

Julie Sunderlin - Jan. 30

## Brown Street Staff

### Ryan Traeger

Sr. Pastor

### Maia Gibson

Associate Pastor

### Amanze Egere

Minister of Music

### Sarah McCann

Administrative Assistant

## Contact Brown Street

905 Brown St.

Lafayette, IN 47904

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[info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org)

[www.brownstumc.org](http://www.brownstumc.org)

## Congress Street Staff

### Ryan Traeger

Sr. Pastor

### Maia Gibson

Associate Pastor

### Rick Puckett

Pastor of Visitation

### Amanze Egere

Minister of Music

### Sarah McCann

Administrative Assistant

### Shane & Teri Lynch

Custodians

## Office Hours

### Pastor Ryan Traeger

**Brown St:** Tues, 10a - 1p & 2p - 6p

**Congress St:** Thurs, 10a - 12p & 1p - 3p

**Contact Info:** [rwtraeger@gmail.com](mailto:rwttraeger@gmail.com)

### Pastor Maia Gibson

**Brown St:** Tues, 10a - 1p

**Congress St:** Weds, 9a - 12p

**Contact Info:** [maia.gibson@inumc.org](mailto:maia.gibson@inumc.org)

## 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 us at [info@brownstreetumc.org](mailto:info@brownstreetumc.org) or [info@cosumc.org](mailto:info@cosumc.org).**