

JANUARY 2026

THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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

Living With Your Star Words

by Sarah McCann

IN THIS ISSUE

What's Happening at
Brown St. & Congress St.
Upcoming Events
De-Decorating
Birthday's

On January 4th 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 you bathroom mirror. You could write in 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 or 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.

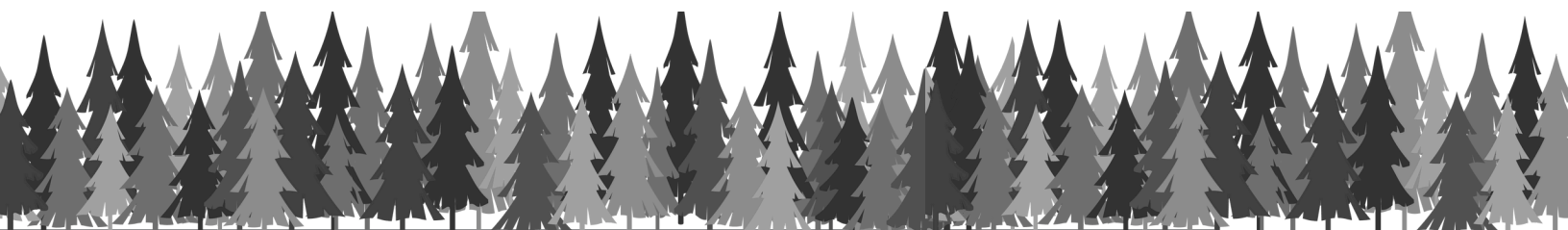
[Upcoming Lay Servant Classes](#)

Questions? Contact **Lynn Nelson** at
765-491-7856 or nelson@cosumc.org.

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

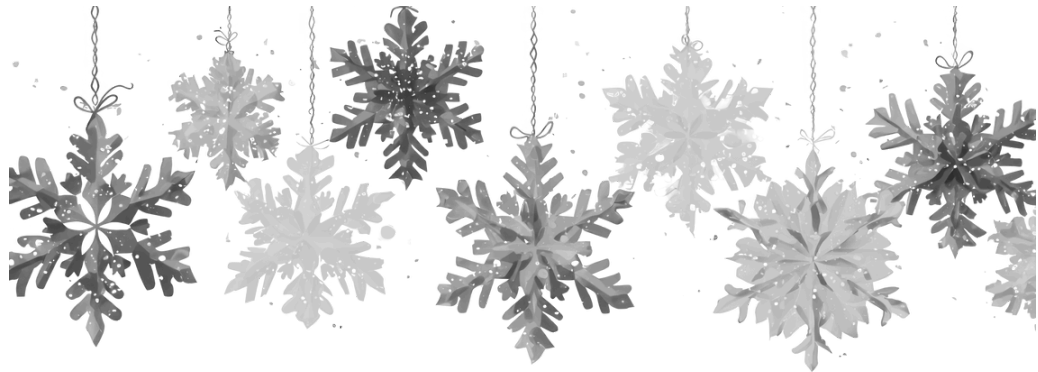
If you are interested in helping prepare the meal, set up, or clean up, we could always use your help!

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 6th 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

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!

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.

Join Us: Bingo!

Sunday Jan. 18th

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

De-Decorating

We will meet on **Wednesday, January 7th at 1:30pm** to de-decorate the sanctuary from the Advent and Christmas seasons. Please join if you are able!

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 VanCleeef - 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

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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

Pastor Maia Gibson

Brown St: Tues, 10a - 1p

Congress St: Weds, 9a - 12p

Contact Info: maia.gibson@inumc.org

Worship With Us

Sundays at 9am - Brown Street

www.facebook.com/BrownStreetUnitedMethodistChurch

Sundays at 10:30am - Congress Street

www.facebook.com/evolvingfollowers

**If you are able and interested in receiving this newsletter via email,
reach out to us at info@brownstreetumc.org or info@cosumc.org.**