

Bluff Hall Church Newsletter

January 2026



The Advent Season has come and gone for another year and as Advent Wreaths are being put away, let us not forget to carry the Advent message with us into the New Year.

HOPE: We should continue to 'Hope' for Jesus's return not only during Advent but throughout the year, every year! As faithful Christians, we should know that Jesus's words, as noted in over 100 references about his return in the Bible, are true. Jesus spoke about His return in many key verses including Matthew 24:30 where he promises he will come again, "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and glory"

LOVE: Love is in the King James version about 370 times and in some of the new modern versions around 700 times. What is the difference? Different translations use different English words for the original Hebrew and Greek words such as ahavah, hesed, agape and phila which translate into 'love' in the English language although they carry varied meanings of affection, commitment, or sacrifice. We find it easier to show our love for friends and family but God also challenges with the difficult task of loving our enemy. Matthew 5:44," But I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." How do we do this? The answer is praying for them, acting with kindness toward them, avoiding retaliation and show/reflect God's character and love through us.

PEACE: Peace is a feeling we have because of our trust and faith in God. We also would all love to see peace in this world we live in, but most of us are not able to contribute significantly to this 'ideal'. It only takes a quick look at social media to see that the world is far from peaceful with each other. We can certainly all contribute to peace daily, within our own relationships, whether it be with our spouse, our families, friends, neighbors, or people we may not even know but meet along the way as we continue to pray daily for God's intervention to facilitate a peaceful world.

JOY: What is Joy? The Bible is full of verses about joy, highlighting it as a gift from God, a fruit of the Spirit, and a state to embrace even in trials. A couple passages are Nehemiah 8:10 '...for the Joy of the Lord is your strength' and Romans 15:14 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' We all define, view, or feel Joy in different ways or in different situations. Joy, is also about attitude. We can find Joy in most anything if we look at the positives of even any negative situation. Starting the day with an 'Attitude of Gratitude' can certainly go a long way in seeing Joy in the life that God has given us.

**Contact
Information**

**Bluff Hall Evangelical
Free Church**
951 North 400th Ave.
Payson, IL 62360

Church Phone
217.656.4370
bluffhallefc@gmail.com
www.bluffhallefc.org

Sunday Worship Service: 9:00

Important Information for Annual Meeting:

- Annual Meeting Reports are due to Debbie Dodd by Sunday, January 18. May be emailed to: hrdodd@adams.net
- Disconnect your landline? Change your email or residential address? Have a new cell phone number? Please send an email to: bluffhallefc@gmail.com or text Diana at 217-242-6276
- Annual Meeting: Sunday, February 2, following morning worship service. There will be a carry-in following the meeting.

Retreat House Fundraiser

SUPPORT THE URSA RETREAT HOUSE
PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

50/50 RAFFLE!

50% to the winner
50% supports the Ursa Retreat House

RAFFLE TICKETS
1 FOR \$5 OR 5 FOR \$20

PANCAKES, WHOLE HOG SAUSAGE, AND BISCUITS & GRAVY

JANUARY 17, 2026
7:00 AM TO 11:00 AM
UNITY HIGH SCHOOL

RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE SOLD UP UNTIL THE DAY OF THE BREAKFAST. DRAWING TO BE HELD THE DAY OF. YOU NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN!

Retreat House Fund Raiser Raffle Tickets will be available for purchase the day of the breakfast. You may also get information regarding purchasing from Kevin Beck @ 217-430-3784 or Steve Loos @ 217-440-6144.

Bluff Hall now accepts Online Gifts

Want to give online?

Go to bluffhallefc.org/donate and click the link to fill out the giving form.



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Prayer Needs



New, Recent, & Updated Requests:

- Those fighting cancer:
 - Vaughn Flesner
 - Earl Mast
 - Janice Waner
 - Danny Thomure
 - Travis Cooper
 - Darla Schneider
 - Johnny Sparks
 - Jim Brinkman
 - Chuck Laaker
 - Becky Mello
 - Julie Hooper
 - Dan Riggs
 - Penelope Summers (9 year old)
 - Hazel & Brielle Kramer - young daughters of Andy and Kathleen Kramer
 - Debbie Lohnes (wife of Dan Lohnes) - white count staying up after bone marrow treatments.
 - Dan Rigg
 - Shannon's family friend with aggressive cancer
 - Wayne Stotts - beginning cancer treatment
- Wanda Speckhart - recovery from amputation surgery on left leg and successful rehab and adjustment to prothesis. Pray for right foot to continue to show good blood flow.
- Mary Speckhart - healing of legs
- Sarah Riggs - foot surgery on December 30
- Carolyn Kaiser - had successful aneurysm surgery for aneurysm with nursing home rehab in Bloomington, IL
- Linda Carpenter - outpatient surgery
- Barb Cutforth - healing of 2nd degree burns
- Jimmy Lund - recovery from heart attack
- Karen (Sandy's sister) - heart issues
- Grant Cole - healing from shoulder replacement
- Pastor Gus Carns - recovery from heart valve replacement
- Barb Ray - healing from knee replacement surgery
- Jennifer and Chad Glosemeyer - loss of home due to fire

Ongoing Requests:

- Marilyn Speckhart, Joan Groh, Gail Oitker, Bob Cutforth, Betty Speckhart
- BJ Cutforth - Needs miraculous healing
- Missionaries: Alex McClain, Dan Lohnes, Ahdee Wayzee, Stuart Humphrey
- Myanmar Mission and Seminary
- Those who gave us our freedom.
- Our local, state and federal leadership
- Search Committee, future pastor God is preparing to serve as our shepherd and the church as a whole.
- Those in the community grieving the loss of loved ones:
 - Family of Donnie Dingerson
 - Family of Jerry Lund
 - Family of Don McCleary
 - Family of Beatrice Terstriep

Military:

Seth Miles, Henry Dodd, Ryan Mena, Blaine Brown, Gary Velasquez, Lucas Velasquez, Kason Spratt

If you need pastoral care or have prayer concerns for the prayer chain, please contact one of the deacons or call church phone 217-656-4370

Angel Tree Update



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Due to weather canceling church X2 in December, we are continuing the Angel Tree to benefit Payson Seymour Grade School. There are 'Angels', with items requested, on the Christmas Tree in the dining hall. We encourage you to stop by, take an angel or two, and place your donated items on the back pew or in the basement by **Sunday, January 4**. These items do not need to be wrapped. If you are unable to pick up an Angel and would still like to donate, this is a list of items needed for the school:

Boys & Girls Underwear sizes from 3T to Child Size 8

Boys & Girls Pants, Shirts/tops, and Sweatshirts sizes from 3 T to Child Size 10

(Note: no gloves, mittens, scarves, or hats are needed currently)

Christmas Party Update

Due to the wonderful Midwest weather, the Christmas party had to be rescheduled to January 4th at 5:00. All plans continue as per previous newsletter and flyers. We change our reservations with JJ's Catering through Sunday, December 28th. Please let Diana (217-242-6276) know of any changes ASAP. Those with previous reservations have all been contacted and we have you counted in!

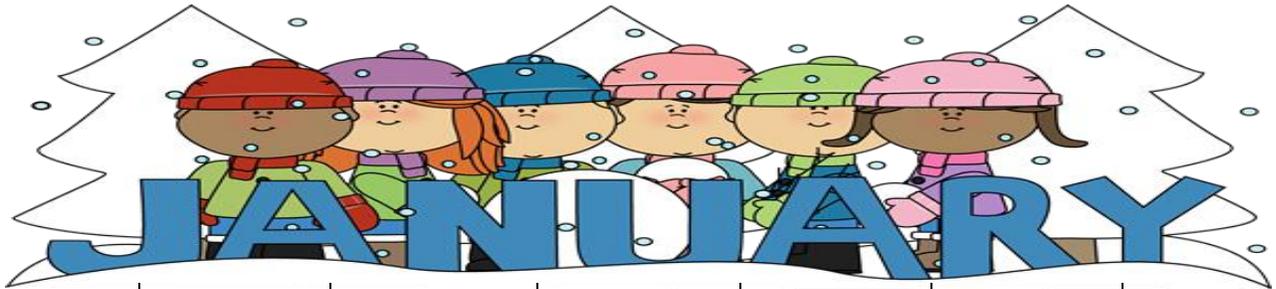
Search Committee Update

The search process continues, and the team remains prayerful and engaged. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support.

Bluff Hall Outreach Mission

If you have a neighbor or know someone that the church might be able to serve in our community, please let the Missions Team know through Mary Fairchild (217-257-7250)

. - Thank you!



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year!	2	3
4 Church Christmas Party 5:00	5	6	7 Church Council 7pm	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Retreat House Pancake Breakfast
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Deacons for the month: Geoff and Trevor
Flowers: Oct. 2024 thru March 2025 Winter bouquet or any donated flowers



- Jan. 3 Steven Loos
- Jan. 4 John Felten
- Jan. 14 Junior Mena
- Jan. 19 Richard Moore
- Jan. 20 Megan (Maiers) Beaver

Women's Fellowship News

Meeting: No January meeting. The next meeting is February 25, 2026.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Much appreciation to Teresa Loos-Tedrow, Geoff Cole and Barb Cutforth for leading our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.



Announcements

We will be taking down the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary & basement only, following worship service on January 4th. Please plan on staying as many hands make quick work!



Looking Ahead

February 1 - Annual Meeting with carry in following the meeting.

Services

Online

For those who are unable to join us in person, check out the live stream. Services are also available on our YouTube channel. Both are available by searching [bluffhallefc](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbluffhallefc) at youtube.com

Please pass along any information you have for the February newsletter. It may be emailed to bluffhallefc@gmail.com or texted/called to Diana @217-242-6276. Thanks!



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