

First United Methodist Church Champaign

Where connecting, growing, and serving are a way of life

The Mission of First United Methodist Church is to:

- CONNECT people with God and one another
- GROW as disciples of Jesus Christ
- · SERVE others.

Messenger

Volume XXXI, No. 21 December 5, 2023

Dearly Beloved,

Advent began on Sunday! Over the course of the next few weeks, we will hear a lot of Christmas music. The stores and radio stations are already playing songs of the season. Some are religious and many are secular. Most are familiar. Our church will be offering several opportunities for us to enjoy the music that deeply inspires and delights us. Please look through this *Messenger* carefully for the upcoming dates of these services and concerts.

There is one song that I am especially waiting to hear. Not in Walmart or at the doctor's office, but in our sanctuary on Christmas Eve. "Silent Night" holds a dear place in our hearts and traditions.

As a pastor, it is one of my favorite moments. My view from the front of the sanctuary is of the gathered congregation holding lit candles softly illuminating our sacred space. There is a holiness that fills the room as followers of Jesus Christ place their trust, once again, in the goodness of God toward this dark and broken world.



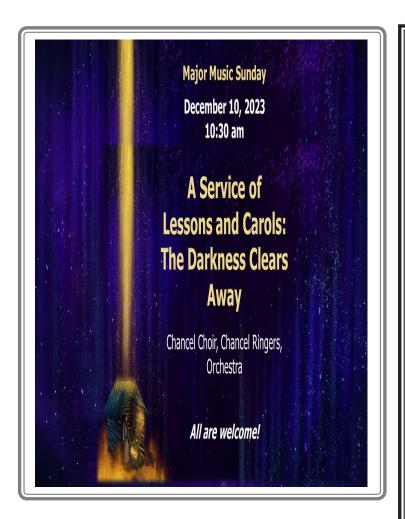
"Silent Night" speaks to the stillness and holiness of that blessed night in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Its gentle melody and profound lyrics invite us to reflect on the peace and hope that Christ brings into our world. As we sing, "All is calm, all is bright," I hope you will find solace in the calmness and brightness that Jesus brings into our lives, especially during times of turmoil and uncertainty. Perhaps we can pray especially for Bethlehem, a Palestinian town in the West Bank. The leaders in Bethlehem, in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, have canceled Christmas.¹

But Christmas cannot be canceled. Christmas is our reminder that no matter how bleak or dim the world becomes, God still breaks into this world with "love's pure light." Jesus comes again and again...on silent nights and into busy days to change our hearts, minds and behaviors. May your faith deepen as the days darken. And then, join me in worship on Christmas Eve to celebrate the Light of the World, Jesus.

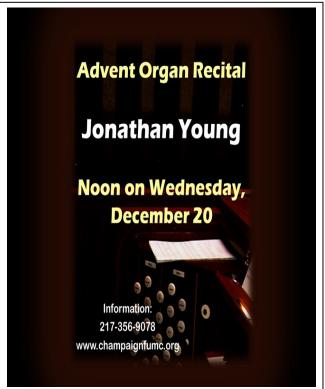
Love First, Pastor Julia

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/29/palestinian-christians-christmas-ceasefire-cancel/









Jonathan Young will be playing the Advent Organ Recital at FUMC on Wednesday, December 20, at noon! Jonathan is Director of Music at the Catholic Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Champaign, Illinois, and accompanist for the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear our amazing organ and to enjoy music of the Advent and Christmas seasons. Come to the recital at noon and then join for lunch in Friendship Center at 12:30. Bring a sack lunch or order a box lunch for \$12.00 from the church by calling 217-356-9078, by noon on Monday, December 18. All are welcome!



9:00 - 10:30 am

All children and their families are invited to join us for our Santa Breakfast! We will enjoy breakfast, crafts, a visit from Santa and more! RSVP to Meredith by emailing meredith@champaignfumc. org or calling 217-356-9078 by December 6.

Fall 2023 FUMC Music Scholarship Students



Salvatore Castronovo, Bass Section Leader, Chancel Choir Salvato Salvatore Castronovo, baritone, hails from Rockland County, New York, and graduated with a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance and Literature under Nathan Gunn at the University of Illinois in May 2023. Before coming to Illinois, he received an Honors Bachelors of Music degree from the University of Delaware while studying with D. Blake Smith. Recently, he performed the role of Carl-Magnus in Lyric Theatre's production of A Little Night Music. Last spring, he made his Lyric Theatre @ Illinois main-stage debut as The Count in Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro. Through the University of Delaware Opera Theatre program he performed as Carl-Magnus, A Little Night Music, Il Conte, Le nozze di Figaro, and Don Apostolo Gazella, Lucrezia Borgia. Throughout his undergraduate career he

also performed as a bass soloist for a few sacred concert works including J.S. Bach's Magnificat and Bach's solo cantata, Ich habe genug.



Jet Conway, Assistant to Director, Youth Music

Jet Conway, 19, is originally from Barrington, Illinois. He began playing music on the piano at age 4, and at the age of 10, picked up the trumpet as well. In high school, Jet joined the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra and went on tour with the group to Europe, where he played in historic concert halls such as the Gewandhaus in Germany and the Musikverein in Austria. Now, Jet is a sophomore at the University of Illinois studying Trumpet Performance in hopes of becoming a professional orchestral trumpet player some day.



Peiqi Huang, Soprano Section Leader, Chancel Choir

Praised for her "limpid soprano voice", Chinese soprano Peiqi Huang is a versatile musician who thrives on diverse stages. In April 2023, Peiqi made her Krannert Great Hall debut as the soprano soloist in Mahler's Symphony No.4 with Sinfonia da Camera under the baton of conductor Ian Hobson for their season finale. She was also invited to perform the same solo with conductor Andreas Delfs and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in 2021. She was recently seen as the soprano soloist in Eric Whitacre's Goodnight Moon with Hindsley Symphonic Band and Pergolesi's Stabat Mater with Concerto-Urbano Baroque Ensemble. Her operatic roles include Adele (Die Fledermaus), Lucia (Lucia di Lammermoor, Musetta (La

Bohème), Susanna (Le Nozze di Figaro), Tonina (Prima la musica e poi le parole), Papagena and First Lady (Die Zauberflöte), Euridice (Le Carnaval de Venise) and Venus (Venus and Adonis). Peiqi holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Central Conservatory of Music, a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Eastman School of Music, and completed her Doctoral of Music Art in Vocal Performance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Emma Perisho, Soprano Section Leader, Chancel Choir

Emma Perisho is a junior studying Choral Music Education at the University of Illinois. At UIUC, she is involved in Illini Student Musicals and sings in Chamber Singers. This past semester, she performed in Illini Student Musicals' production of "The Prom" and was the Vocal Director for their end of semester Cabaret. This is her second semester helping out with Chancel Choir and she is so grateful to be a part of it!





Pierzina, Angel Choir Assistant to the Director junior instrumental music major at UIUC. This is her second with Angel Choir and she is so grateful for the experience! instrument is flute, but she grew up singing and playing either whenever she gets the opportunity! At UIUC, she is a full tuition music scholarship and she studies flute with Dr. Outside of music, she enjoys running, crocheting, and thank the church for all their support and hopes that major music performance!



Anna Poel, Youth Music Assistant to the Director

Anna Poel is currently a junior studying Music Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She studies trumpet under Dr. Charles Daval along with having a background in voice and piano. She is a Trumpet Section Leader in the Marching Illini and participates in other organizations like the National Band Association and the Music Education Student Association. She is also a brother of Kappa Kappa Psi, the Honorary Band Fraternity at UIUC. Over the summer, she marches with the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps. This is her second semester working with Youth Music, and she is thankful for the opportunity to work with the awesome students here at FUMC!



Salvador López Portillo, Alto Section Leader, Chancel Choir

2022/2023 season has been a significant one for countertenor Salvador López Portillo. Praised for his "magnetic presence and burnished sweetness of tone" (South Florida Classical Review), he debuted the roles of Zia Principessa in Suor Agelica, Alisa in Lucia di Lammermoor, Marcellina in Le Nozze di Figaro, Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream, at the Miami Beach Classical Music Festival. Previous roles include Zita in Gianni Schicchi with Eastman Opera Theater, and Apollo and Bacco in Luigi Rossi's L'Orfeo with Eastman Collegium Musicum. Additionally, he was recently seen as the alto soloist in the Mexican premiere of John Bolow's Ode for St. Cecilia's Day with Chorale San Miguel and Pergolesi's Stabat Mater with

Concerto-Urbano Baroque Ensemble. Mr. Lopez Portillo has been awarded several accolades, including the Howard A. Stotler Graduate Fellowship, the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship, the National Fund for the Arts and Culture Graduate Music Study Grant and the Mexican National Institute of Fine Arts Foundation Grant. Mr. Lopez Portillo earned his Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Tecnologico de Monterrey in Mexico, and his Master of Music from the Eastman School of Music. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Illinois under the guidance of Prof. Sylvia Stone.



Ida Tello, Assistant to Director, Angel Choir

Ida Maria Tello is earning her undergraduate degree in music education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with an emphasis on choral studies. Her primary instrument is voice, and she enjoys teaching private voice and piano lessons around the community. She has also served as an assistant K-5 instructor at the Chicago Botanic Gardens and as the president of the American Choral Directors Association UIUC chapter. After graduating in the Spring of 2024, she plans to begin her graduate studies in ethnomusicology and hopes to continue research on protest music around the globe. During this time, she would love to continue her teaching journey part-time!



Wesley Uppinghouse, Assistant to Director, Chancel Ringers

Wesley Uppinghouse is a freshman pursuing Agricultural Business (Farm Management) at Parkland College. He plays Double and Electric Bass among various other instruments. He is the recipient of the Arion Award and has received Jazz awards from all over the US including Jazz at Lincoln Center New York, Essentially Ellington NY, and several universities. He is a part of several groups playing at various venues this upcoming year. Wesley made his debut major music performance in 2014 singing Once in Royal David's City when he was 10.

Music Ensembles at FUMC
Angel Choir (3 yrs – grade 5)
Youth Music (grades 6 – 12)
Choral Union (community chorus hosted by FUMC)
Chancel Ringers
Chancel Choir
Perceptions Praise Team
Clarinet Group
Periodic Instrumental Ensembles

Welcome Lucia Elena Ocampo!



Lucia Elena Ocampo was born on November 21, 2023, at 10:39 pm. She weighed 7 lbs and is 21 inches long. Her proud parents are Krista and Miguel Ocampo. Her proud grandparents are Pete and Dawn Beyler. Her proud uncle and aunt are Chad and Ashley Beyler.



2023 Poinsettias



If you wish to donate toward the purchase of poinsettias, please fill out this form and send or deliver it to the Church Office. Please include your check in the amount of \$10.00 per poinsettia payable to FUMC.

Orders cannot be accepted after December 11, 2023.

- () May be taken to shut-in or nursing home
- () Will Pick Up after 10:30 a.m. Advent Service on Sunday, December 17

Given: () In Honor
of_____

Given: () In Memory

OI_____

Your Name(s)

Phone Number(s)

Number of Poinsettias Ordered _____ Paid \$_____

Youth Events

What makes a good story? A protagonist (who is hopefully likable) for sure. A problem or something that has to be defeated or solved. The climax of the story and then, the falling action. After all of this, the story is (hopefully) resolved.

I love stories. I love books, movies, graphic novels, TV shows, audio books, web comics, fairy tales, memoirs, etc. We all love a good story - fictional or true! The best stories make you think about them hours, days, weeks, months, and even years later.

There are many Bible stories that stick with me this way as well! Moses's time in the desert and then returning to help the Israelites is one. I also love the story of Joseph's dreams and then his brothers asking him for food. The story of Queen Esther is exciting and the story of Job causes me to think of it long after I finish reading. And who can forget the parables? I love the prodigal son, the mustard seed, and the lost sheep.

The stories in the Bible teach us about God, people, and ourselves. There are so many things to learn and read in the Bible. So, what Bible stories are the ones that stick with you?

Meredith
Meredith@champaignfumc.org

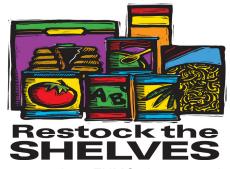
Coming Events:

Sunday, December 10 - Youth Group Progressive Dinner Christmas Party!! - Join us for our Progressive Dinner! We'll meet at the church at 5:00 pm; then we will drive to three different houses for appetizers, an entrée, and desserts! We'll also be playing games at our last stop, so make sure to bring an odd gift for White Elephant!!

Sunday, December 17 - No Youth Group; Youth Group Christmas Break Begins

Sunday, December 18 - \$50 Deposit Due into the church for ASP

Sunday, January 7- First Youth Group of 2024!!!!!!



Food pantry update: FUMC always needs staple food items such as in the list below. This outreach ministry works through a helping coordinator at empty tomb to deliver needed food and healthcare items to folks in our community. There are five church members willingly volunteering to make deliveries to those in need--at least one delivery a week. Our pantry provides the non-perishable items and fresh food is added as they shop at a local store. Monetary donations are always welcome. Bring your bag of groceries to church on Sundays or drop them off in the Resource Room during the week. Thank you so much for thinking of others in this community in need of healthy staple foods.

Especially needed are: cereal, canned whole kernel corn, and macaroni & cheese.

Love 1st!

Attention: There's a critical need for one more food volunteer to make food deliveries to needy folks in the community. Instruction and details about the process will be shared with a willing assistant. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Sue Bachman at 217-359-4390 or susanbachman@hotmail.com.



Visit our website (www.champaignfumc.org) and fill out a prayer request form or call the church office at 217-356-9078 and leave a message.

COME CELEBRATE ADVENT WITH UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH!

Wednesday, December 6, 1:30 PM Friendship Center North



Join us for Conversation, Carols, and Festive Cheesecake!

All women of the church are invited to attend

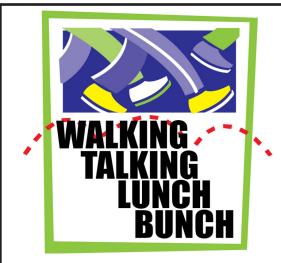


UWF Executive Board will meet on Wednesday, December 6, at 9:30 am in the Conference Room.

UWF Installation of Officers/Advent Program will be on Wednesday, December 6, at 1:30 pm in Friendship Center North.

Dorcas Circle will attend the UWF Installation of Officers/ Advent Program on December 6.

Sarah Circle will meet on Monday, December 11, at Terry Benson's home. Paula Charter will lead the program.



December 5 - Smith Burgers

December 12 - Maize

December 19 - Potluck at

church

December 26 - Martinelli's

We meet at 11:30 on Tuesday mornings at the church. The program is led by Debbie Chew, a professional with experience in exercise, and includes a group stretching and warm up time, structured walk adapted for varying levels of ability, and a group lunch. This program is offered free of charge, with the lunch costs being \$10.00. We walk from the church at 12:20 to the restaurant. Please contact the church at 217-356-9078 for information or to register for the walking program.



Clarinet Quartet at Schnucks in Savoy on Thursday, December 14, at 5:00 pm

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Financial Status of FUMC

Hello Friends.

First United Methodist Church in downtown Champaign has had an amazing year. Thank you so much for your contributions. These totals are through November 30 only.

As of October 31, 2023, the annual operating or general fund balance during 2023 has a negative balance of (\$20,459). Major contributors to income through October 31 of 2023 were pledged gifts of \$330,895, non-pledged gifts of \$68,825, and Foundation distributions of \$131,041. Again, thank you!

Looking ahead, 2024 is expected to continue with ministries moving forward at First United Methodist Church Champaign. Commitments for 2024 have been received from 76 households with estimates of giving totaling \$352,406. We are on track to reach our 2024 pledge goals. Of the 76 households, 6 were new to pledging and 48 increased their giving. We do expect to hear from other households regarding their pledge. Thank you for your generosity to our church! There is still time for anyone who has not completed their commitments and additional gifts are welcome. Visit the church website to donate online or send checks directly to the church.

I do not know the details, but I look forward to learning of God's plan for 2024. God is good, all the time. Have a great day.

Peggy Schneider Chair, FUMC Finance Committee

Need a Ride to Church on Sunday?

The Wellspring Health and Wellness Committee is grateful to Gwen Uppinghouse for accepting the position of van driver. The van will be available for pick up for the 10:30 service two Sundays per month initially. Other transportation services may be available on Sundays when the van is not scheduled.

To schedule a ride, please call Sharon at the church office no later than 2:00 pm on the Thursday afternoon before the Sunday when a ride is desired. Sharon can be reached at: (217) 356-9078.

Champaign FUMC Preliminary Operating Fund Status November 30, 2023

Total Receipts \$622,606.04

Total Payments \$660,266.89

Net \$<37,660.85>

Thank you for your gifts as we connect, grow, and serve.

Tina James Neil Fotzler

Business Manager Church Treasurer

2023 Year-End Giving

Key dates and times to be sure your gift is included in 2023: Deliver your gift to the church office by noon on Friday, December 29 (the building will close at noon that day). An envelope mailed with a postmark date no later than December 31, 2023. You might consider a Tuesday mail date of December 26 to allow for delivery by the 29th or an electronic giving transaction initiated before December 31, 2023.



2024 Offering Envelopes

If you would like a supply of offering envelopes for 2024, they are available now in the Church Office. We have weekly sets (52 envelopes) and monthly sets (12 envelopes). The envelopes are dated but not pre-numbered.

GREEN TEAM NOTES: Disturbing, Sad Headlines

A recent headline read: 'Almost 1,000 birds die in one night from striking a Chicago building.' In one night alone, hundreds of migrating birds lost their lives from striking windows in a Chicago convention center. While this may seem rare or unpreventable, it is estimated that between 100 million to 1 billion birds are killed annually in the United States alone from window collisions. Birds strike glass because reflective or transparent glass is often invisible to them, so they are not aware they are flying into a solid surface.

Bird populations are declining at alarming rates due to window strikes and other causes, such a loss of habitat, larger-than-expected predators (mostly domestic and feral cats), and toxic chemicals. Yet birds contribute to our well-being and help keep our ecosystems running smoothly. The contributions of birds to environmental health include:

- -Eating between 400-500 tons of insects per year
- -Scavenging carcasses, reducing the spread of diseases such as rabies and distemper
- -Dispersing seeds, spreading plants into new areas
- -Assisting in pollinating plants

We often ask 'what can I do?' or 'how can I make a difference'? You can help reduce bird deaths in several important ways:

- -Keep cats indoors during the daytime.
- -Install external sun shades or awnings on windows to block the reflection of the sun.
- -Install screens on the outside of windows, rather than the inside.
- -Hang cords, strings, or ribbons in front (outside) of windows.
- -A film, CollidEscape can be applied to the outside of a window to disrupt the reflection.
- Funcils
 White Chalk
 Markers

 Smarkers

 Smarkers
- -Decals or anti-collision stickers can help prevent collisions if placed outside of windows.
- -Lines can be drawn on the outside of windows using white chalk markers (see photo).

On a larger scale, new buildings and renovations can follow the guidelines included in the Bird Safe Building Act (HB 247) which was recently signed into law in Illinois. While this law

applies to state-owned buildings, this bird-friendly design can be incorporated into any new construction and renovated buildings.

Look for a Green Team table on December 17 that will feature some external window decals and markers for use in your home, along with bamboo containers that can be used instead of Styrofoam take-out containers, continuing our focus on reducing waste.

For questions or suggestions, please contact the church office or Sandy Burgener at: sandsburgener@gmail.com. Other Green Team members include Terry Benson and Karen Wood, along with Cindy Shepherd, our Faith in Place Resource Person.

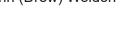
Congregational Life of FUMC

January 1-15, 2024



- 1 Bill Pigott
- 3 Jessica Mattingly
- 4 Brooklyn Kauffmann
- 4 Elena Tompkins
- 4 Eric Wildhagen
- 5 Linda Boehm
- 5 Judy Oldham
- 6 Mara Willoughby
- 7 John (Drew) Weldon

- 8 Quinn Murphy
- 8 Melanie Paul
- 8 Steve Poole
- 9 Rachel Fields
- 11 Angie Brix
- 12 Isaac Bodony
- 12 Catalina Gonzalez
- 12 Millie Sims
- 12 Derryl Singley
- 13 Susan Beaulin
- 13 Dee Dee Hines
- 14 Nancy Nash



Hospital Report

Hospitalized in the last few weeks: Julie Booth, Bobby Caton, Sylvia Herzog, Mary Poole, and Elsie Skaggs.



Going into the Hospital?

If you are scheduled by your physician to be hospitalized, please indicate "<u>Champaign First United</u> <u>Methodist Church</u>" on your admission form.

Privacy guidelines will not allow hospitals to notify the church without your permission. If you can, call the church office before you are admitted, or have a family member or friend let us know.

I don't want to miss you when I make hospital calls.

NEXT Messenger Deadline: January 4, 2024 published on January 9 Articles may be submitted by e-mail to:

bberner@champaignfumc.org or brought to church.



- 1 Larry & Julie Booth
- 2 Bob & Barb Cicone
- 3 Kenny & Karen Wood

Deaths

Our sympathy and prayers are extended to the family and friends of Betty Walker, who passed away on November 12, 2023; to Cathy Ehler and family at the passing of Cathy's grandson, Jonathon Morrissey, on November 17, 2023; and to Drew & Laura Bargmann and family at the passing of Drew's father, Bo, on December 3, 2023.





December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:30am ARK Nursery 10:00am Church Service Check Ins 10:30am In-Person Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service On Facebook, YouTube, Website 5:00pm Youth Music 6:00pm Youth Group	4 6:30pm Scouts BSA Troop 1 7:00pm Choral Union	10:30am All Staff Meeting 11:30am Walking Talking Lunch Bunch at Smith Burgers 5:30pm DREAAM Basketball 5:30pm DREAAM STEAM Lab 6:00pm Chancel Ringers 6:30pm Cub	Women in Faith Executive Board 1:00pm Wednesday Recovery Group 1:30pm UWF Installation of Officers/Advent Program 6:00pm GriefShare Support Group	5:30pm DREAAM Basketball 6:30pm Perceptions Praise Team 7:00pm Clarinet Group	8	9:00am DREAAM Basketball 9:00am Major Music Rehearsal
Major Music Sunday Van Reserved for Youth Christmas Party 9:30am ARK Nursery 10:00am Church Service Check Ins 10:30am In-Person Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service On Facebook, YouTube, Website 5:00pm Youth Group Progressive Dinner Christmas Party	11 6:00pm Sarah Circle 6:30pm Scouts BSA Troop 1 7:00pm Choral Union	Morning Book Club	Recovery Group 7:00pm Chancel Choir 7:30pm Venturing Crew 1	in Motion 5:30pm DREAAM	15 6:00pm Pack 11 Pack Parent Committee Meeting with Pizza	16 9:00am DREAAM Basketball 9:00am Santa Breakfast
Poinsettia Sunday VAN Reserved for Sunday morning 9:30am ARK Nursery 10:00am Church Service Check Ins 10:30am In-Person Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service On Facebook, YouTube, Website	18 6:30pm Scouts BSA Troop 1 7:00pm Choral Union Concert	9:00am Tuesday Morning Book Club 10:30am All Staff Meeting 11:30am Walking Talking Lunch Bunch - Potluck at church	Organ Recital: Jonathan Young 12:30pm Advent Lunch 1:00pm Wednesday Recovery Group 7:00pm Chancel Choir 7:30pm Venturing Crew 1	21 5:30pm DREAAM Basketball 6:30pm Perceptions Praise Team	22	9:00am DREAAM Basketball

First United Methodist Church 210 W Church Street Champaign IL 61820

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The Messenger is a bi-weekly newsletter for members and friends of First United Methodist Church, Champaign, IL.

For more information, please call the Church Office at (217) 356-9078. Nonmember subscription rate \$20.00 per year (or can be found at no cost at www.champaignfumc.org.)



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