

# THE Visitor

January 2026

Grace United  
Methodist Church  
318 N Center Street  
Geneseo, IL 61254  
309-944-4208  
geneseogumc@gmail.com  
geneseograce.org

## The Secret to a Happy Marriage

Allow me to share a little story about our marriage.

I met Pastor Ely not in church, but through Yahoo Messenger. At that time, he was in Saudi Arabia, and I was in South Korea. What began as simple online conversations slowly grew into a year of friendship. When he finally came home and we met for the first time at the airport, I was wearing my 3-inch heels. I had always imagined he was taller than me, but to my surprise, I was taller that day! (Thank God for heels!)

Just one week later, we were married.

Our life together began with love, laughter, and like every marriage many misunderstandings, even though we were both pastors. We soon realized that being spiritual leaders did not make us immune to differences, pride, or struggles. But through every challenge, God taught us the true secret to a happy and lasting marriage: prayer.

Pastor Ely never confronted me harshly when he noticed my weaknesses. Instead, he brought them before God. In prayer, he honestly told the Lord about my attitude, my bossiness, my pride, and **everything else that needed God's touch. And through those prayers, God gently opened my eyes. He** allowed me to see myself clearly and lovingly, and He helped me change.

There were moments when I cried - **not because I wanted to change, but because I didn't want to let** go of certain things I held on to. Yet God showed me that surrender was necessary for the sake of our marriage. As He changed my heart, I learned that letting go was not losing, it was choosing love.

That was the moment our relationship began to grow closer, deeper, and sweeter. Prayer taught us humility. Prayer taught us how to communicate. Prayer taught us how to love each other the way God loves us.

Today, I can truly say:

A couple that prays together, grows together.

Because when we bring each other before God, He brings our hearts closer to one another.

*Pastor Cel*



Pastor Excelsis (Cel) Biteng  
 Email: celbiteng@gmail.com

318 N Center Street  
 Geneseo, IL

Sunday School:  
 Adult Classes 8:00am  
 Ladies Bible Study  
 10:00am

Worship Sunday at 9:00am  
 Kids Worship (Ages 4-11)  
 Sunday at 9:00am

## stayCONNECTED



309 944-4208



geneseograce.org



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Geneseo Grace

2025 Offering Needed to Meet Monthly Budget

**\$31,800.00**

November 23 - December 14

**\$32,360.25**

General Fund

**YOUR GIVING MAKES  
 A DIFFERENCE.**



For your convenience we have added 3 ways to give online!

Scan the QR code | website: geneseograce.com |  
 Download the "Vanco" mobile app



Date	Attendance	
	Worship	Sunday School
December 7	83	6
December 14	No Service	

## Prayer Requests

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Adopted children & families | Kim Brake               |
| Joseph Titus Countryman     | Craig                   |
| Dana                        | John Davis              |
| Ruth Ann Eaker              | Jeff DeMay              |
| Family Member               | Cathy Gaudet            |
| Nikki Haars                 | Jean Hahn               |
| Lois Johnson                | Mary Kintigh Family     |
| Andrew Lord                 | Clarice Massingill      |
| Michelle Matheis            | Karen Myhre             |
| Patty                       | <b>Powell's Brother</b> |
| Bev Radue                   | Ellen Rubino            |
| Barb Sigwalt                | Sally Swanson           |
| Todd                        | Karen Venter            |

- Those in Assisted Living & Nursing Home:
- |               |                 |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Joyce Criddle | Mary Lou Deane  | Bev Radue       |
| John Riggs    | Connie Ryner    | Barry Snodgrass |
| Sarah Stees   | Carolyn Stenzel | Rita Webb       |

Please contact Julie Dahlquist with prayer updates.

BOOK CLUB  
Tuesday, January 6  
at 1:00pm



Our fun group meets in the church library. We will discuss "The Dog Who Saved Me" by Susan Wilson. New faces are welcome anytime!



OWLS Lunch  
Thursday, January 15  
at 11:30am

Join us for lunch followed by an interesting program. Sign up in the lobby or call the office.



- 03 - Lisa Depies
- 10 - Connie Ryner
- 11 - Tom Vorac
- 13 - Tracey Wise
- 16 - Carolyn Stenzel
- 20 - Taylor DeSplinter
- 21 - Helen Akers  
Joe Loucks
- 23 - Rachel Daniels  
Larry Johnsen  
Ginny Simon  
Rosella Wentz
- 24 - Marlene Ashpole  
Kenneth Miller
- 28 - Ron Blank  
Gail Farley  
Sharon Yoder
- 29 - Karl Flynn
- 31 - Karen Doy  
Jack Neumann



- 08 - Daryl & Linda Rice (54)
- 13 - Ken & Cindy Pippin (58)
- 21 - Tony & Ginny Simon (70)



Anyone who is involved in FROGs, GUMDROPS, or VBS will need to attend a "SAFETY GRACE" meeting on Sunday, January 18, 2026 following worship service. Please mark your calendars & plan to attend. A future class may be scheduled, if needed. Thank you!



Join us for Breakfast following  
Worship  
Sunday, January 25  
If you can donate an egg  
casserole, coffee cake, etc.  
please contact Paula Schulte  
309-945-2964  
- Served by Opal Circle -

Grace participated in the  
Annual Christmas Walk.  
Thank you to our volunteers  
who built a float for the parade.



HOT CHOCOLATE  
Weather





On December 12, our little ones celebrated Christmas. They got to reenact the Nativity. They had fun wearing their Christmas jammies!



# JANUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>8:00am - Adult Sunday School 9:00am - Worship 9:00am - KIDS Worship 10:00am - <b>Women's</b> Bible Study</p>				<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>OFFICE &amp; BUILDING CLOSED</p>	3
<p>4</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>Celebrating <b>Everybody's</b> Birthdays! Cake will be served in the lobby following Worship</p>	<p>5</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1:00pm - Book Club, Library</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	8	9	10
<p>11</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p>	<p>12</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p> <p>6:00pm - Opal Circle Meeting 6:00pm - Missions Committee Meeting, Library</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:00am - Pearl Circle Meeting, Chapel</p> <p>12:00pm - PEO Meeting, Otterbein</p> <p>6:00pm - Evangelism Meeting, Chapel</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>15</p> <p>11:30am - OWLS Lunch, Otterbein</p> 	16	17
<p>18</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>10:30am - Safe Grace Class</p>	<p>19</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p> <p>6:00pm - Church Council Meeting, Chapel</p>	20	<p>21</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	22	23	24
<p>25</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>Breakfast Served Following Worship</p>	<p>26</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p>	27	<p>28</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	29	30	31