





# JANUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
	7:00p SMART Recovery @ WO			3:00p Anticipation Celebration & Burning Bowl Ceremony @AMC		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	5:30p SING Rehearsal 7:00p SMART Recovery @ WO	6:00p Read United Buddies Backup Training @AMC		7:00p Men's Group		JUST Civil Rights Tour @ Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:30a   11:15a @WO   @AMO 1:00p W.O.K.E @WO		6:30p Ministry		12:00p Sisters in Faith Social	6:00p 3 <sup>rd</sup> Space	
JUST Civil Rights To 6:00p 2nd Sunday Seekers	SMART Recovery  @ WO	Round Table Meeting		7:00p Men's Group	Event	
9:30a Wesley Oak 11:15a	7:00p	20	21	6:30p St Andrew's	23 Southern	24 Southern
Asbury Memorial	SMART Recovery			Academy String concert	Lights conference-	Lights conference-
1:00p W.O.K.E @ WO	@ wo			7:00p Men's Group	St Simons Island	St Simons Island
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:30a Wesley Oak 11:15a	12:30p Wisdom Seekers					
Celtic Worship Service (AMC)	3 ING NEHEAISAL			7:00p Men's Group		
1:00p W.O.K.E @ WO	7:00p SMART Recovery @ WO					



### The Sacred Pause: Entering the Anticipation Celebration

In a world that constantly urges us to move faster, do more, and rush headlong into whatever comes next, the Anticipation Celebration offers something quietly radical: a pause.

Hosted by Cheri Hester, the Anticipation Celebration is a reflective, participatory gathering that invites people to step out of the noise and into intentional visioning. "In simple terms," Cheri explains, "it's a pause button and a visioning moment." After releasing what no longer serves us, participants are guided to imagine the life they want to grow into. Through reflection and writing, each person composes a letter to their future self—naming who they hope to be, what they want to cultivate, and how they want to feel by the end of the year.

This kind of intentional space feels especially meaningful right now. Many of us move from one year to the next without ever stopping to ask what we truly need or desire. Cheri names a shared longing she sees in people today: clarity, grounding, and a sense of agency. "This ceremony creates space to let go, breathe, and consciously choose what comes next—rather than letting life just happen to us," she says.

Unlike a traditional worship service, the Anticipation Celebration is deeply experiential. Rather than being talked to, participants are invited in. The gathering includes silence, writing, imagination, and shared ritual. Everyone arrives carrying their own stories, beliefs, questions, and hopes—and all of it is welcome. It is personal, interactive, and rooted in the trust that each person already holds deep wisdom within themselves.

That trust sits at the heart of the celebration's progressive faith grounding.

The Anticipation Celebration honors inclusivity and personal agency, recognizing that spiritual growth looks different for everyone. There is no pressure to believe a certain way or arrive with polished answers. Instead, the space blends ritual with imagination, faith with forward movement, and inner wisdom with community support.

When the celebration concludes, Cheri hopes participants leave feeling lighter and more hopeful. "I want people to feel a quiet confidence—like something has shifted, even if they can't quite name it yet," she shares. "A sense that they've released what was heavy and planted something meaningful for the year ahead."

For those who may be unsure about attending, Cheri's invitation is simple and heartfelt: "Come. You don't have to have anything figured out. You don't need the right words. If you're carrying something you're ready to release—or longing for a fresh start—this space is for you. Curiosity is more than enough."

The Anticipation Celebration is not about certainty or perfection. It is about making room—for breath, for intention, and for the sacred work of becoming.

### Thursday, January 1st 3:00pm

Asbury Memorial Church 1008 E. Henry Street, Savannah, GA JUST invites you to start 2026 off steeped in our own local history

Parking lot onsite. Arrive a little early. Guests welcomed. Any ??? Just call Rev. Claire Marich 630-338-5478

# Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum 460 MLK Jr., Blvd. Learn with friends on Saturday, January 10 @ 10 am OR Sunday, January 11 @ 2 pm



### Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision Fundraiser



What happens when we take away one of our most relied-upon senses—and allow ourselves to be guided instead by trust, vulnerability, and community?

That question sits at the heart of Dining in the Dark, a powerful experience offered by the Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision. More than a dinner, the event invites participants to share a meal while blindfolded, guided by servers from the Savannah Police SWAT and Georgia Air National Guard. For a few intentional hours. the tables are turned. assumptions are challenged, and empathy deepens.

As guests enter the space, sight gives way to sound, touch, and conversation. Simple tasks like finding a glass of water, cutting food, or locating a fork become exercises in patience and trust. Laughter mixes with uncertainty, and strangers quickly become companions on a shared journey of discovery.

For many, the experience is humbling. It reveals how much of our world is designed around sight, and how rarely we stop to consider what daily life is like for neighbors who navigate differently. But Dining in the Dark is not about pity. It is about respect, dignity, and recognizing the gifts and leadership of people who are blind or visually impaired.



Photos: Amy Hildreth



The evening also serves as a fundraiser supporting the Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision's mission to empower individuals through education, advocacy, and community programs. By participating, guests not only gain insight but help sustain life-changing work right here in our city.

Many Asburians have participated in Dining in the Dark over the years, but this year's event carries an extra special meaning for our church family.

One of our own, Fitz Kincade, has a personal connection to the mission of the Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision. Fitz, who is now 8 years old, lives with juvenile glaucoma. Though it wasn't discovered until he was five, doctors believe the disease began much earlier.

Since then, Fitz and his parents, Bridgette and Chris Kincade, have been on a long, often overwhelming journey, traveling far and wide to find the best specialists and navigating countless appointments, tests, medications, and surgeries.

Most recently, Fitz underwent goniotomy surgery on both eyes at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami. For those who know Fitz, this news may come as a surprise. His joy is contagious, his personality is larger than life, and his dance moves are nothing short of legendary. Fitz meets each day with creativity, courage, and a determination to live fully and joyfully.

Through fellow Asburian Roy Hill, the Kincade family was introduced to the Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision this past fall. The connection quickly became a lifeline.

"Roy has been such a blessing to our family," shared Chris Kincade. "He immediately connected us with the center and walked alongside us as we learned what resources were available. We had felt lost navigating this unknown and terrifying path. Now we know we are not alone."

This year, Fitz wanted to make sure everyone knows just how much this event means to him. He has personally invited all of Asbury Memorial and Wesley Oak to join him, Bridgette, and Chris for what he enthusiastically describes as "a really cool dinner with a SWAT team!"

And one final, meaningful note: this year, Fitz and Chris will be sharing their story during the event.

Tickets for Dining in the Dark tend to sell out quickly. If you miss the opportunity to experience this meaningful event in person this year, you can still be part of its impact. Donations may be made to the Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision, helping ensure that individuals and families continue to receive the care, resources, and support they need. Every gift helps build a more accessible, compassionate community—and extends the spirit of this event far beyond one evening.









### TURNING THE PAGE TOGETHER

Asbury's Ongoing Commitment to Reading Buddies



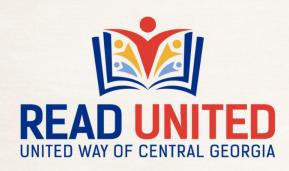
"Our volunteers are known—and the difference they make matters."

A recent meeting with Cheri Dean from United Way reminded us how much our volunteers are valued in the Read United Buddies program. Now, we're excited to host a special training right here at Asbury Memorial.

Join us on January 6, 2026, at 5:30 PM.

Open to current volunteers and those interested in becoming backup Reading Buddies.

Let's show up for our kids and community!



### **UPCOMING TRAINING**

- **Interpolation** January 6, 2026
- ( 5:30 PM
  - Asbury Memorial Church
  - Welcome & prayer
  - Testimonial
  - Training & Q&A

If you've ever wondered how you might make a difference through education, this is your invitation.

# A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER

Our church Christmas party was truly a gift-filled with laughter, warmth, and the kind of joy that reminds us why community matters so much. It was a wonderful time for everyone, from the youngest among us to the young at heart.

The food alone felt like a small miracle. Tables overflowed with delicious dishes, lovingly prepared and generously shared. Thanks to everyone who brought their culinary creations and offered them so freely. Like the story of Jesus and the loaves and fishes, there was more than enough—because when we come together in love, abundance follows.

We were also thrilled to be blessed once again by a very special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, who made the long journey all the way from the North Pole just to be with us. Their presence brought smiles, laughter, and a little extra magic to an already joyful evening.

Most of all, the night was a beautiful reminder of what we share: a caring, generous, and joyful church family. At Asbury Memorial Church, moments like these remind us that church is not just a place we go—it's a community we belong to.

We are deeply grateful for one another and for the love that continues to bring us together. What a wonderful way to celebrate the



WHERE CHURCH BEGINS:

### THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN

Ask almost any adult who still feels connected to church where that sense of belonging began, and the answer is rarely about a sermon or a committee meeting. More often, it starts with a memory: sitting on a colorful rug, hearing a Bible story told with care, laughing with friends, or feeling safe and known by adults who showed up week after week.

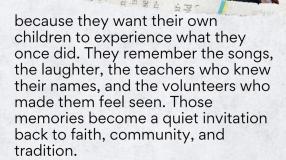
### That is where church begins.

Children's programming is not just childcare during worship. It is sacred ground. It is where the feeling of church family is first formed—and where a lifelong relationship with God and with people often takes root.

The First Experience of Belonging For children, church is not defined by theology or doctrine. It's defined by how it feels. Do I feel welcome? Am I safe? Do the adults here care about me? When children experience joy, kindness, patience, and consistency in these early years, church becomes associated with love and belonging.

Those early experiences shape everything that comes later.

**Memories That Call Them Back** Many adults return to church years later-not because of obligation, but



Volunteering with children is planting seeds that may not bloom for decades, but when they do, they matter deeply.

A Key Moment in Faith Formation Children's ministry is one of the most important moments in a person's spiritual life. It is often the first place where they learn:

- That God loves them exactly as they are
- That church is a place of joy, not
- That faith and kindness go hand
- That community shows up for one another

These lessons are carried for a lifetime.







# December 3<sup>rd</sup> Space Event



Our December 3rd Space gathering was a beautiful evening of creativity, connection, and community, held at Sentient Bean. We were truly blessed by all who shared their talents that night—through music, words, and presence. Each contribution added something meaningful and unique to the space we created together.

As wonderful as the performances were, the best part of the evening was simply being in community. Gathering with one another, sharing time and conversation, and holding space for creativity reminded us how life-giving it is to come together beyond the walls of the church.

Thank you to everyone who attended, participated, and supported this 3rd Space gathering. These moments matter, and they continue to shape who we are as a community.





# Mark Your Calendars

Be on the lookout for more information coming soon about our January 3rd Space event, happening

January 16th at 6:00 PM

We can't wait to gather again!

### **DAILY AFFIRMATIONS FOR 2026:**

### BEGINNING EACH DAY ROOTED IN GRACE

A new year does not arrive asking us to be perfect. It arrives, inviting us to be present.

Daily affirmations are not about pretending life is easy or denying pain. They are gentle truths we return to—anchors that help us begin each day grounded in grace, courage, and hope. As 2026 unfolds with its unknowns and possibilities, these affirmations offer a way to start each morning remembering who we are and whose we are.

### Why Affirmations Matter

The words we repeat shape the way we see ourselves, others, and God. In a world that often tells us we are not enough, affirmations become acts of quiet resistance. They remind us that love comes first, that our worth is not earned, and that hope is still possible.

Spoken daily, these affirmations can become prayer.

### Affirmations for the Days Ahead

### For Belonging

- I am loved, just as I am.
- I belong in community, not because I am perfect, but because I am human.
- There is room for me here.

#### For Courage

- I am strong enough for what this day holds.
- I can face uncertainty with trust and grace.
- I choose courage over fear, even in small ways.

#### For Compassion

- I meet others with kindness, including myself.
- I listen before I judge.
- Love is my first response.

### For Hope

- New beginnings are always possible.
- Light still shines, even when the path feels unclear.
- I trust that goodness can grow from today.

#### For Purpose

- My life has meaning and value.
- I am called to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly.
- Small acts of love matter more than I know.
- I am becoming more whole with every step I take.
- God's grace meets me exactly where I am today.
- I am enough, and I am still growing.

### Making Affirmations a Daily Practice

You might choose one affirmation each morning, write it in a journal, place it on your mirror, or speak it during a moment of quiet prayer. There is no right way—only the intention to begin the day rooted in truth rather than fear.

Some days the words will feel natural. Other days they may feel aspirational. Both are okay. Affirmations are not about feeling a certain way—they are about remembering what is true.

Carrying These Words into 2026

As this new year unfolds, may these affirmations become companions—steady reminders that you are not alone, that grace goes with you, and that love continues to call you forward.

At Asbury Memorial Church, we believe daily practices like these help shape lives of compassion, justice, and hope.

May 2026 be a year where you speak kindness over yourself, courage into your days, and love into the world—one morning at a time.

# Rethinking New Year's Resolutions: A Faithful Way Forward

Every January, the world invites us to make New Year's resolutions—to be better, do more, try harder. While the intention is often hopeful, resolutions can quickly become burdensome, rooted more in pressure than in grace. As people of faith, we're invited to approach the new year a little differently.

Instead of asking, "What should I fix about myself?" we might ask, "Where is God inviting me to grow?"

#### **From Perfection to Practice**

Traditional resolutions often focus on outcomes: lose weight, save more money, accomplish more. Faith invites us into practices, not perfection. Practices are gentle, ongoing, and shaped by grace. They recognize that transformation happens over time and in community—not through shame or rigid self-control.

A faithful New Year's practice might sound like:

- Making space each week for rest
- Practicing generosity with time or resources
- Listening more deeply—to God, to others, to ourselves
- Choosing compassion, especially when it's difficult

These aren't boxes to check; they're postures we grow into.

### **Rooted in Grace, Not Guilt**

At the heart of Christian faith is the reminder that we are already loved-before we change a single thing. Any intention we set for the new year should flow from that truth. Growth rooted in grace leads to freedom, not fear.

As we step into this new year, may our intentions be shaped not by guilt, but by hope. Not by comparison, but by calling.



May this year be marked by justice, compassion, courage, and love.

And may you know, every step of the way:

YOU ARE WELCOME AND CELEBRATED HERE!

## **Gordon Baker Memorial Fund**

My dear friends and family,

Recently I received information from Mr. Randy Canady, Asbury's Church Administrator, informing me of the current total of donations to the Gordon Baker Memorial fund at Asbury Memorial Church. I am astounded by your generosity. I want you to know that already Gordon's generosity was shared with the

**Asbury Church** Hospitality Team for their work for the luncheon following the Celebration of Life Service on September 9; and to honor all of the church staff who helped to make Celebration so beautiful, he also supported SING, the Savannah Children's Choir that rehearses at Asbury Memorial. As you know, Gordon's life was dedicated to family, to the promotion of libraries, and to the education of children of all ages. To steward Gordon's wishes, I will continue to foster and find more ways to promote his



desires through this memorial fund that you helped to establish. If you ever wish to help continue that mission, please do not hesitate to contact Randy Canady at Asbury Memorial Church. God bless you all, and thank you so much for helping to maintain some "Gordon Baker loving" in the lives of others.

Most sincerely, Tom Lewis

# DECEMBER MOMENTS OF MEANING: Fellowship, Gratitude, and Joyful Song

December offered us sacred moments of connection that reminded us how deeply blessed we are to be part of a caring and loving church family. Two gatherings in particular captured the heart of the season—moments rooted in gratitude, memory, and joy.

### A Cherished Elderberry Christmas Luncheon

Our Christmas Elderberry Luncheon for church members ages 80 and above was a truly lovely time for all who attended. The room was filled with conversation, laughter, and the warmth that comes from long-shared history and deep relationships. It was a gift simply to be together—to slow down, enjoy a good meal, and celebrate the season in fellowship.

This gathering was especially meaningful as it gave us one more opportunity to be in community with the wonderful and inspiring Dr. Pat Stewart before her passing. Time spent together that day now feels even more precious. We are grateful for her presence, her wisdom, and the many ways she enriched the life of our church. Holding space together in that moment was a sacred gift.

#### Sharing the Joy Through Song

Later in the season, our annual Christmas caroling visit to some of our homebound members brought the joy of the season beyond our walls. We raised our voices to make some Joyful noise, sharing familiar songs and heartfelt smiles.

The guests loved the treats and the music, but the time spent together was just as meaningful. Being present, sharing laughter, and reminding one another that no one is forgotten is at the heart of who we are called to be in the world.

### A Season of Being the Church

Both of these December moments remind us that church is not just what happens on Sunday mornings. It is fellowship around tables, songs sung on front porches, and love shared across generations and circumstances.

At Asbury Memorial Church, we give thanks for these opportunities to connect, remember, and celebrate. May the spirit of this season continue to shape how we care for one emother all year long.













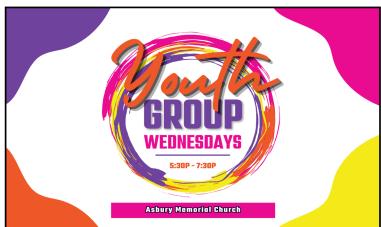


### Men's Group

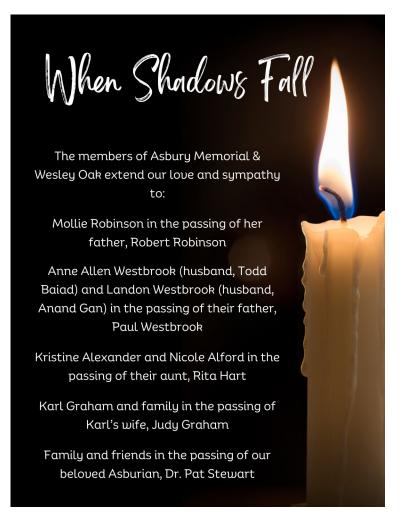
Our Men's Group meets every Thursday at 7:00 PM via Zoom for conversation, support, and spiritual growth. Anyone is welcome to join—any time, from anywhere. No experience or sign-up needed, just drop in and connect!

Meets Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Zoom.











- MONDAYS
- 7:00P -8:30P
- WESLEY OAK CHURCH
- 3124 E. VICTORY DRIVE, SAVANNAH, GA 31404
- ALL ARE WELCOME!



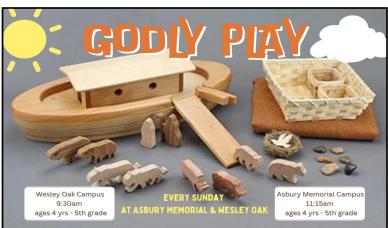
### SUPPORT FOR A BALANCED LIFE

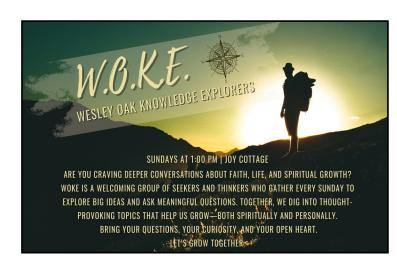
Wesley Oak Church is proud to host SMART Recovery meetings every Monday evening from 7:00-8:30 p.m. SMART Recovery is a program designed to help individuals overcome harmful habits and addictions through practical tools based on cognitive and motivational psychology and addiction research.

Unlike traditional 12-step programs, SMART takes a science-based approach that emphasizes self-reliance, self-resilience, and self-empowerment. Participants are encouraged to become the experts on their own recovery journeys, choosing strategies and supports that fit their needs. Topics may include relationships, substance use, gambling, eating, spending, and other behaviors that can impact well-being.

There is no requirement to commit to a lifetime of meetings. Instead, participants decide when and how long they wish to be involved, making SMART a flexible and welcoming community. The program also recognizes that individuals may benefit from participating in more than one support group, and it values collaboration rather than exclusivity.





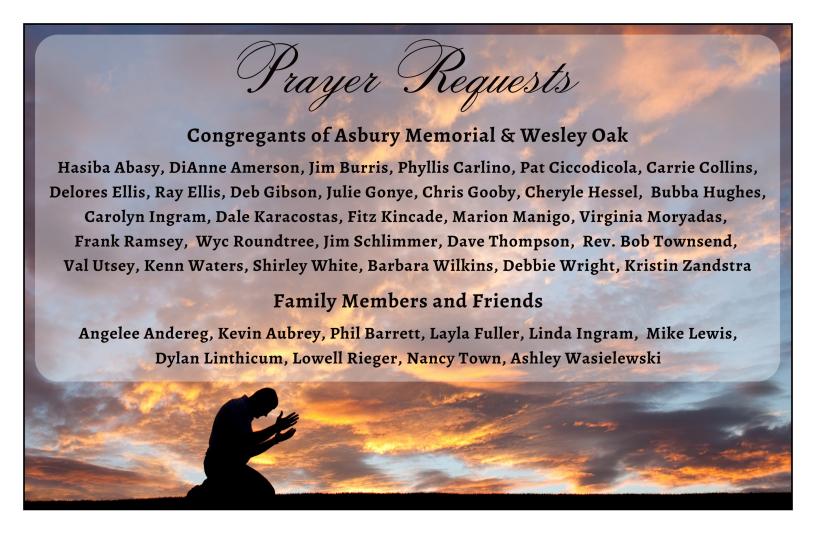




12:30 pm

January 26th 12:30 pm





# WE HAVE MULTIPLE WAYS FOR YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR SUPPORT OF ASBURY MEMORIAL THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS!



#### Mail:

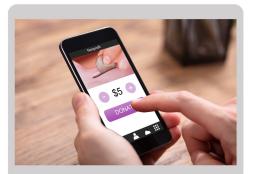
Mail your contribution by check to:

Asbury Memorial Church 1008 East Henry Street Savannah, GA 31401



#### Website:

- Log on to our website: www.AsburyMemorial.org
- Click on the Give Now button
- Complete the form as directed.
- You can set it up to be a recurring donation!



### **Text Giving:**

- From your mobile phone:
- Send your contribution amount to 833-690-5966
- Donate anytime, anywhere
- Use easy debit/credit card registration
- Make a one-time gift or set it up to be recurring

# Asbury Memorial Church

1008 East Henry Street
Savannah, GA 31401-7128
INT.ID 206896
Office 233-4351 Fax 233-5026
www.asburymemorial.org

**Return Service Requested** 

### Flowers in the Sanctuary

Supplying the flower arrangements for the worship service is a wonderful way to commemorate a date that is important to you or a loved one. Please check the Flower Chart in the narthex and sign up. The cost is \$70.

For more information call the church office at 233-4351.

### **Special Funds**

One way to honor or to remember a loved one is with a memorial or an honorarium to some of our different funds such as the Properties Fund, General Fund, Piano/Organ Fund, Family and Children's Ministries Fund, Youth Ministry Fund, Laura Angell Scholarship Fund, Pet Memorial Fund or one of our Mission Funds.

### **Newsletter Information**

If you have an announcement for "The Asbury Update," please email Chris Kincade at ckincade@asburymemorial.org.

### **Mission Statement**

Asbury Memorial is a place where all people can develop their spirituality, use their talents, and grow in faith as we seek to love, serve, and celebrate God, each other, and our community.