

THE PATHFINDER

Loving God, watch over our children as they begin their new school year. Bless them with joy at seeing friends, excitement at new experiences, and a love of learning.

Guide and protect all who learn, replacing fear with joy, anxiety with peace, and tiredness with energy. Give wisdom, patience, and joy to teachers as they serve their students.

In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.



A BACK-TO-SCHOOL PRAYER

From the Desk of Pastor Jonathan

In the bustling symphony of life, it is often the quietest and subtlest of movements that orchestrate the grandest of changes. The concept of the "Butterfly Effect" has captivated the imaginations of scientists and philosophers alike, illustrating how the fluttering of a butterfly's wings in one corner of the world can set off a chain reaction of events, eventually leading to significant consequences in another part of the globe.

This may be an oversimplification of a complex idea but I find this profound principle of interconnectedness mirroring the exquisite design of God's creation. From the intricate web of ecosystems to the intricately woven fabric of human relationships, we witness the divine fingerprint of the Creator in every detail. The Bible itself hints at this delicate yet potent balance in the book of Ecclesiastes:

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." (Ecclesiastes 11:1 ESV)

At first glance, this verse may seem cryptic, but it holds a timeless truth: our actions, no matter how seemingly insignificant, reverberate throughout the tapestry of existence. The analogy of "casting bread upon the waters" suggests an act of generosity and kindness, symbolizing the small seeds of goodness we sow in the world.

Just like a single act of compassion can inspire others to follow suit, the butterfly's wings may initiate a cascade of events that bring about positive changes in unimaginable ways. Conversely, a harsh word or an unkind deed can set off a destructive ripple effect, reminding us of the need to tread lightly and choose wisely in our daily interactions.

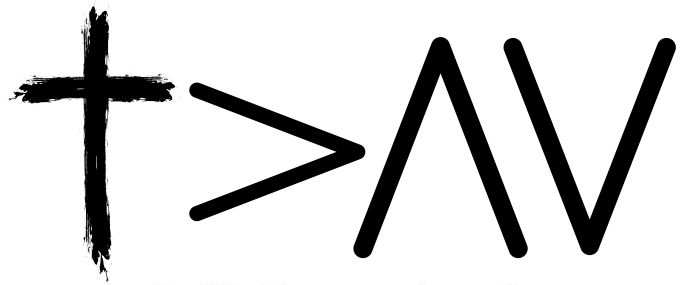
As members of the Church, we are called to be mindful of the interconnectedness of all things and the far-reaching consequences of our choices. Our collective actions can ripple across society, leaving an indelible impact on future generations. We should, therefore, strive to be intentional in our thoughts, words, and deeds, seeking to reflect the love and compassion that Christ exemplified during His earthly ministry.

The Butterfly Effect teaches us that no act of kindness is ever wasted, and even the smallest gesture of love can radiate hope and healing to those in need. Let us embrace the responsibility that comes with our faith and engage in acts of goodness, trusting that God will multiply the effects of our humble offerings for His glory and the betterment of the world.

As we marvel at the intricate balance of God's creation and the undeniable significance of even the tiniest actions, may we be inspired to live as Christ taught us with hearts full of love, minds guided by wisdom, and hands ready to serve. By doing so, we participate in God's divine plan and contribute to a world transformed by the beauty of God's love.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit empower us to be catalysts for positive change, guided by the divine wisdom that governs the remarkable Butterfly Effect of our lives.

August Sermon Series



*God is Greater than the
Highs and the lows*

August 6: Greater than our Needs (Matthew 14:13-21)

Title: "Satisfied in Scarcity"

In the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, there was a seemingly impossible situation with limited resources, but Jesus demonstrated that He is greater than our needs. Through this miracle, we'll learn to trust in His abundant provision and find satisfaction even in times of scarcity.

August 13: Greater than our Fears (Matthew 14:22-33)

Title: "Walking on Water"

The account of Jesus walking on water shows His supremacy over the storms that cause fear in our lives. By focusing on Peter's experience, we'll learn how Jesus is greater than our fears and doubts. As we step out in faith and keep our eyes fixed on Him, we can overcome the raging waves that seek to overwhelm us.

August 20: Greater than our Traditions (Matthew 15:10-28)

Title: "Breaking Boundaries"

Jesus confronts the Pharisees and scribes over their strict adherence to traditions. He shows us that He is greater than empty rituals and legalism. We'll explore how He embraces diversity and breaks cultural barriers to demonstrate that faith and love transcend man-made rules.

August 27: Greater than our Confession (Matthew 16:13-20)

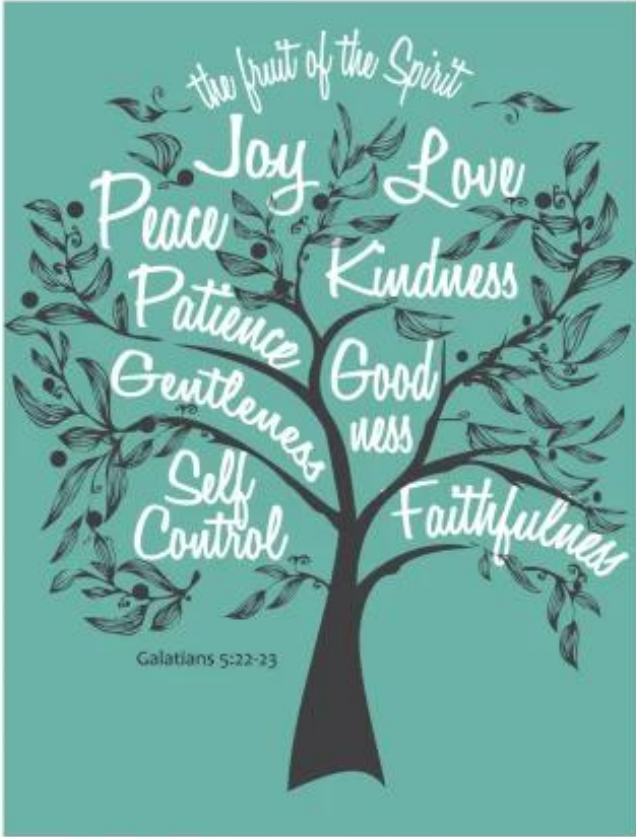
Title: "The Rock of Revelation"

Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah, and Jesus' declares that He will build His church upon this revelation. This passage reveals that Jesus is greater than our understanding, and His divine authority is the foundation of our faith. We'll explore how recognizing Jesus' true identity transforms our lives and empowers us to be witnesses of His greatness.

In this sermon series, we will discover that Jesus is greater than every aspect of our lives - "greater than our needs, fears, traditions, and even our own confessions. By fixing our eyes on Him and recognizing His supremacy, we can find true satisfaction, peace, and purpose in every circumstance. May this series strengthen our faith, deepen our relationship with Christ, and equip us to live as bold and faithful followers of the One who is truly Greater Than all.

Consistory Corner

BY CARRIE CLAYTON



Wow! How is it already August? As a former teacher, August always felt like the “Sunday” of the week-stressful. Stressed with back to school shopping, changing from a summer routine to the school year routine, anxious about seeing old friends and making new, as well as making sure everything is ready to kick off a new school year.

My kids and I spent two partial camp weeks at Dubois Center this summer and the theme was “FruitFULL Faith- A Spirit Filled Life!” We focused on Galatians 5: 16-26 learning about the Fruit of Spirit and how to seek these “fruits” at camp and in our daily lives. I encourage you to read this passage in your Bible and reflect on what it means in your life.

How can we live by these fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control?

As we move into a new beginning here at church and our youth at school, I challenge each of you to find ways to share these “fruits” with those around you; in church, school, and our community. Use them so these new beginnings don’t feel as stressful, knowing that God and the Holy Spirit are always with you to guide you on life’s journey.



The Consistory held a retreat on June 24 to examine our Church's goals and focus. As a result, a new Vision statement for 2023 was drafted: "To encourage all individuals to utilize their time and talents in service to God and the community." We invite the congregation to share their thoughts and suggestions for improvement as we prepare to adopt this as our guiding principle.

Board of Evangelism

BY DIANE HANNA

The Board of Evangelism has several items to share. Here is our update:

- We will be building a float for the Columbia Days parade on Sunday, August 6 at 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, August 12 at 9:00 a.m. We welcome anyone who wants to help to join us at the shed. You can also help us by donating bagged candy for the parade by August 13. We will have collection boxes in the Welcome Center and the rear entry for the candy. We will also need folks to walk with us at the parade on August 19. If you are interested in walking and representing our church, please contact the church office or Diane Hanna.
- We would like to thank Mission and Stewardship for providing the hot dogs and hamburgers for the 5th Sunday potluck.
- We are looking for facilitators for the small groups we will be forming later this year. The small groups will have Bible studies, discuss current events, talk about things of mutual interest to members – any number of things relating to our faith. However, to have the groups run smoothly, there needs to be a facilitator—someone to keep the discussion running smoothly and on track. There will be a facilitator training session before any small groups form. If this sounds like something that might interest you, please contact Pastor Jonathan or Diane Hanna.
- Please remember to sign up to serve as a greeter for a church service. Everybody likes to be welcomed with a smile and a friendly hello.

Weekly Attendance

JUNE 2023

June 4- 163

June 11- 131

June 18- 151

June 25- 135

Board of Mission and Stewardship

BY LYNDA SAUER

Our July monthly meeting was held outdoors due to lack of electricity from the storm.

Thank you to all who contributed to Strengthen the Church. And a huge thank you to all who donated school supplies for Kindercottage, Hoyleton and our local schools.

Our August mission is collection of food for the Backpack Ministry. With school beginning this month, there will be a need to send weekend food home for some students.

You can also save the date of September 23 for apple pie making. Put it on your calendars. We always need lots of help for that event.



Care Connection



by Joanne Counce

FOR BOTH OLD AND NEW MEMBERS, A REMINDER OF WHAT CARE CONNECTION OFFERS OUR OWN MEMBERS AS MISSION STATEMENTS.

K.I.T.---Keep in Touch----Not many members are aware of this mission program for our own members that has been established for 19 years. Established through Care Connection, Diane Hanna, Sarah Wilde, Betty Gummersheimer, Faye Mehrmann, Mary Ellen Norman, Barb Gerstenecker, Jennifer Kuchinski have been making holiday cards for college students, active military, and nursing home residents to let them know St. Paul UCC is always thinking of them. (If interested to help, contact Diane). As your college student gets their new address for this coming school year, please notify the church office so they will receive all notices from the church as well. For nursing home residents, a visit and card are always well received!

Appointment Transportation—This is a free service provided by members to others for hair, doctor, or any transportation needed. Contact Joanne 618-791-6916 or church office.

Church Van Transportation—In addition to members providing transportation to others to church in their own cars, the church van is available. Contact the church office by Friday am, Howie Knapp or Joanne anytime.

Meal Train –Meals are provided by members to anyone needing a meal brought to them after a hospital discharge, illness, or just needing a lift! Since we may not know of your need, please tell us!!

Bereavement Series—A series of booklets are mailed to the family of a deceased church member by the church with Cathy Krueger coordinating. This is done on a quarterly basis to offer ongoing support for the family and has been well received.

Medical Equipment Program—Hospital equipment is now stored in the Eagles Wing. Contact Joanne for the loan of any possible equipment that we may have and we usually have it!

Home Assist-This area includes anyone wanting to visit with homebound, nursing home residents, or an ill person.

Prayer Chain Online—Church will notify you of people requesting prayers.

The Vision Statement for 2023 that was adopted by the Consistory and Pastor Jonathan reads: “To encourage all individuals to utilize their time and talents in service to God and the community.”

Can you find yourself in a Care Connection role? Please contact Joanne 618-791-6916 if interested!

Little Friends Preschool News

Little Friends Preschool is always so appreciative of your kind donations to help offset costs! Not only do we have costs associated with daily operations (snacks & supplies) we also have expenses associated with our 2 field trips (bus rental & venue expenses), holiday events such as our Christmas scavenger hunt, and various holiday parties throughout the year that our tuition does not fully cover. We are looking for sponsors to help us with these activities and events. If you would be so kind to donate, please specify the event you would like to sponsor. We have listed the events below. Sponsors will be acknowledged at the event as well as in the Pathfinder. Thank you in advance for your support!

*September: Field Trip: Braeutigam Apple Orchards

*October: Halloween Program & Party

*November: A Thanksgiving Feast for students

*December: Christmas Scavenger Hunt & Party

*February: Valentines' Day

*March: St. Patrick's Day

*April: Easter Egg Hunt

*May: Field Trip to Willoughby Farm

End of School Year Celebration & Graduation

Book Club



St. Paul UCC Book Club meets monthly on the 4th Monday of the month. All are welcome to join. Here are the upcoming books that will be discussed:

- **August** - *The Measure* by Nikki Erlick
- **September** - *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes
- **October** - *Still Life* by Louise Penny (a mystery)
- **November** - *All the Children Are Home* by Patry Francis

PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY And Their Families

Nathan Schnittger

U.S. Army

Nephew of Cathy Huels

Roberto DeMarquez

Army National Guard

Son of Ursula DeMarquez

James K. Combs

Marine Sgt.

Son of Jim & Debbie Combs

Jack Augustin

U.S. Army

Son of Jason & Shelly Augustin

Sean Parrin

Army Ranger - Italy

Nephew of Jody & Jeff Taake



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JULIE

In our July Messy Church, we got in touch with our sporty side and met the challenge of Philippians 3:14, “Press on toward the goal” in our Messy “Olympic Summer Games.” We heard stories of Daniel and his training plan and the accomplishments that followed. Watch out for stray water balloons-- The summer fun is still happening at St. Paul UCC. We shared food from the grill and celebrated together. Our August event will be “A New Beginning,” centered on Isaiah 43:18-19, where God is doing a new thing!

MESSY CHURCH

Join us on the last Thursday of the month!

Youth Ministry News

On Friday, July 7, we had a youth Lock-In from Friday night to Saturday morning. Molly and Emery Harres and their friends, Maddie, Riley, Ava, and Kinley got really familiar with all the secret nooks and crannies of the church. Generations-old hiding spots were passed on for the epic game of hide and seek that went into the wee hours. Flashlights came in handy! During creative time we painted the prayer room wall and made “finger labyrinths” with beads, board and hot glue. It was early morning when the energy wound down. We watched “Narnia” in an upstairs room and made chocolate chip cookies to supplement breakfast. French toast, bacon and fruit was on the official menu. Thank you to Curt Harres for chaperoning the evening shift and Debbie Notter who stayed up all night with Pastor Julie and the girls.



The Spirit of Sharing serves meals to hungry people in Collinsville, out of St John’s UCC and other churches. We helped out on Tuesday, July 25. A first shift met at St Paul at 10:00 am, earlier than we began the year before. We set off for First United Methodist church at 3:00 in the afternoon. Interest in these meals had greatly increased in the community. Last year we served in the neighborhood of 100 suppers-to-go. This year we planned on nearly twice that. We had such positive feedback about our chicken salad that we made it again. The Pathfinder went to print as this event was happening. Please check in with volunteers and youth to find out more about how it went.

On deck for the 23rd of July was a trip to Soulard to be locked in a room. The theme was Haunted Hotel. Check in with our young people to find out if anyone was brave enough to attend. Woooooo.....



Special Visitors...

On Sunday, August 6 we welcome the youth group from Immanuel Church in Indiana. They will be visiting Eden Seminary and volunteering in the St Louis Area during the week. Youth, please stay after church to share lunch and games with our guests.



Columbia Days
Parade
August 19
4:00 pm

The Columbia Days parade is coming up in just a few weeks!!

This year we have a birthday cake theme for the church's 175th anniversary. Youth please come and help Sunday, July 30 to craft the candles for the cake and Sunday, August 6 at 6:00pm to craft the poms that will cover the frame.

Float finishing will be on Saturday, August 12 9:00 am and
Sunday, August 13 at 6:00 pm.

Yes! There will be snacks.

Yes! Join us on the day of the parade to celebrate our church!

Confirmation

The next Confirmation season will soon be upon us. Wednesday, August 23rd is our welcome dinner and our first class begins Wednesday, August 30th. Please look for an email message from Ms. Denise or Pastor Julie. You can register on our website at the event registration tab.

<https://www.stpaulcolumbia.org/event-registration.html>

Director of Christian Ed
Denise Johnson

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS



Every parent wants his or her child to have all the advantages possible for a good education. Not only do we want to acknowledge, support, and pray for our students, but we also want to acknowledge, support, and pray for all efforts to learn, grow, and gain divine wisdom.

The ritual of Blessing the Backpacks will be held, during the Message for All Ages, at the 9:30 a.m. worship service, on Sunday, August 20.

If you unable to attend, plan to watch live-stream or later at your convenience, on the church website www.stpaulcolumbia.org.

We ask that all families keep this ritual by blessing your children's backpacks.

This ministry program is for ALL CHILDREN and YOUTH, third through seventh grades.

After School Program members may participate in all groups offered, or just choose one or two of the activity groups.

The groups include Kid's Crew, Youth Handbells and Super Singers Choir. Our church van will pick up students from Parkview and Columbia Middle School.

Kid's Crew members enjoy snacks, going for walks, playing games, doing mission projects, and growing in fellowship together.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Youth Handbells Playing handbells requires a commitment to attend weekly Wednesday practice and performing one Sunday a month.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Super Singers Choir requires a commitment to attend weekly Wednesday practice and performing one Sunday a month.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

To register for our After School Program please go to our website:
www.stpaulcolumbia.org

For questions you may contact: Denise Johnson
Cell 618-340-2952 Email: christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org

ST. PAUL
WEDNESDAY AFTER SCHOOL
PROGRAM
BEGINS SEPTEMBER 6
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Faith Formation Celebration is planned for Sunday, September 17, at 9:30 am. This is how our Christian Education department begins a new year in our faith journey. Our family-friendly “Spark Story Bible” will be handed out to Preschool children and families that are new to St. Paul UCC. This bible is the one that our preschool – second grade Sunday school teachers use in their classes. During worship third graders will receive their new study bibles. The most important part of Faith Formation Celebration, however, is renewing our covenant with God, to help each other grow in faith. God inspired many to tell, to write, to teach, just as God continues to inspire us today to read, to study, to tell and to live faithfully.... for God is still speaking!



thank you



The definition of a volunteer is a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

The jobs can be big or small, and sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference in everyday life to the ones they help. For instance, helping clean up after a party or assisting in a yard sale for charity. Other times, it's teaching a Sunday school lesson, spending hours creating a beautiful quilt, or cleaning, waxing floors, DIY projects, cooking, delivering meals and serving in many ways around our church and our community.

We are so thankful! We want to let our volunteers know how special they are!

Let's gather and take a moment to celebrate, relax and enjoy some food, fun and conversation.

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch will be held on Sunday, October 22, at 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. RSVP by text, email or call to Denise Johnson 618-340-2952 or christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org

august

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

		1	2	3 6:15 pm Personnel 7pm Executive Committee	4 8 am Quilters	5
6 Kindercottage Collection 9:30 Worship and communion 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time	7 10 am Staff Meeting 7pm Stewardship Board 7pm Property Committee	8	9	10 7 pm Board of Evangelism 7 pm Cemetery Board	11 8 am Quilters	12
13 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time	14 10 am Staff Meeting 6:15 pm Finance 7pm Consistory	15  Pathfinder Articles Due *****	16	17 5:30 pm Technology Team	18 8 am Quilters	19  4 pm Columbia Days Parade
20 Backpack Blessings 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time 	21 10 am Staff Meeting 7:30 Board of Worship	22	23 6pm Confirmation Welcome Dinner 6:30 pm Little Friends Open House for Registered Families	24	25 8 am Quilters	26
27 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time	28 10 am Staff Meeting 7 pm Book Club	29	30 6 pm Confirmation	31 5:30 pm Messy Church		



Memorials



Labyrinth Fund

In Memory of Edna Dell Weinel given by:

Harry Wilson
Deborah Pazderka
Robin Ploeffler
Rev and V Horn
Coleen Jones
Brian and Cheryl Fogarty
Erin O'Reilly
Dale and Susan Fiedler
Bobby and Phyllis Thomas
Nancy Cash
Will and Robbie Devenport
Billy and Ellen Lewis
Clark and Joann Kossina
Mary Lynn Harres
Debra Franke
Mary Lynn Harres

Debra Franke
Shirley Asselmeier
William and Martha Hawn
Jo Anne Odem
Daniel and Joan Daab
Al and Allison Wolfe
Bruce and Joanne Counce
Melissa Wohlwend
Gigi Abbott
Robert and Mary Ellen Niemietz
Anne Dunn
Pam Erickson
Arthur and Judith Alexiou
Joan McGennis
Larry and Shirley Hoy

Our Members in Senior Living

Garden Place
480 DD Rd.
Columbia, IL 62236
618-281-4200
Clarice Giffhorn Rm. 204
Ed Schutte Rm. Rm. 113
Grace Volkert Rm. 110

Dammert G.C.
The Esquiline
Betty Lou Carle
726 Community Dr.
Belleville, IL 62223

Garden Place
Gene Haller: Apt 15
735 Columbia Ave.
Waterloo, IL 62298
618-223-5834

Magnolia Terrace
Mary Fassel
623 Hamacher St.
Apt 122
Waterloo, IL 62298

Our Members in Nursing Homes

Itegrity
Dorothy Klein
253 Bradington
Columbia, IL 62236

Eden Village
Nira Probstmeyer
400 S. Station Rd.
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Oak Hill Nursing Home
Gladys Ludwig
Don Naumann
Lucinda Smith
623 Hamacher St
Waterloo, IL 62298
618-939-3488

Financial Report

	June		Year to Date	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Revenue				
Tithes & Offerings:				
Pledged & NonPledged	27,548.00	33,602.00	194,746.37	206,002.22
Misc. Contributions	50.00	122.00	5,447.00	6,560.00
Interest Income	686.48	139.64	2,409.83	1,657.55
Endowment Interest Income	0.00	0.00	27,476.17	27,504.51
Rental Income	0.00	0.00	300.00	850.00
Misc Income	476.25	7,087.00	7,179.92	21,888.13
Total Revenues	28,760.73	40,950.64	237,559.29	264,462.41
Expenses				
Personnel	28,367.70	28,695.41	171,988.96	180,665.65
General Expenses	18,619.98	25,522.75	68,517.39	86,483.81
* OCWM	2,277.69	2,578.53	16,042.80	16,704.40
Total Expenses	49,265.37	56,796.69	256,549.15	283,853.86
Net Receipts	(20,504.64)	(15,846.05)	(18,989.86)	(19,391.45)
RESERVE'S			103,400.77	70,509.60
*OCWM 10,000.00 out of St Paul Mission (833.33 monthly)				
Solar Loan Balance	30,850.61			

St. Paul United Church of Christ
127 St. Paul Street, Columbia, IL 62236



The Pathfinder

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday
9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul United Church of Christ
Phone - 618-281-5102 / FAX - 618-281-3032 /
E Mail - office@stpaulcolumbia.org
stpaulcolumbia.org

Does the church office have
your current contact information?

We don't want you to miss out on any information. If you haven't been receiving emails, chances are we don't have a current email address for you, or the email went to your spam.

If you are unsure, please contact Amanda in the office by email (see below) or call 618-281-5102.

Staff Contact Information:

Senior Pastor

Rev. Jonathan Bangera- srpastor@stpaulcolumbia.org
Cell phone (215) 512-4024

Interim Associate Pastor for Youth & Visitation

Rev. Julie Kies - assocpastor@stpaulcolumbia.org

Office and Communications Coordinator

Amanda Stapf office@stpaulcolumbia.org

Financial Administrator

Barb Gerstenecker- financial@stpaulcolumbia.org

Christian Education Director

Denise Johnson - christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org

Lead Custodian

Terry Schramm - custodian@stpaulcolumbia.org

Custodian, Janet Zinn

Music Coordinator/Organist

Lori Morton - music@stpaulcolumbia.org

Youth Bell /Inspire Band Director

Sue Phillips - band@stpaulcolumbia.org

Evening Bell/Choir Director

Emily Thoman- choir@stpaulcolumbia.org

Morning Bell Director, Patti French

Preschool Director

Jody Taake - preschool@stpaulcolumbia.org

Cemetery Treasurer, Robin MacLaughlin
cemetery@stpaulcolumbia.org

Consistory Members

President - Dennis Hoguet

Vice President - Shirley Bergmann

Secretary - Shirley Hoy

Shirley Asselmeier

Carrie Clayton

Rob Dehn

Susan Hibbits

Diana Kleinschmidt

Susan Kuergeleis

Faye Mehrmann

Mark Thompson

Al Wolfe