THE PATHFINDER

MAY 2024



A Mother's Day Blegging

There is but one and only one, whose love will fail you never. One who lives from sun to sun, with constant fond endeavor.

There is but one and only one, on earth there is no other. In heaven, a noble work was done when God gave us a Mother.



Sermon Series – May 2024

Our sermon series "Echoes of Truth in Song" is a tribute, of sorts, to the amazing and powerful music ministry teams of our church. This month we also observe Music Sunday. The sermon titles use the titles of popular songs and hope to make profound connections between the timeless messages found in Scripture and the powerful lyrics of popular music. Each week, we will delve into a passage from the Gospel of John, uncovering the deep truths that resonate with the melodies and themes of beloved songs. Through this series, we will discover how God's Word speaks to us in fresh and relevant ways, guiding us to a deeper understanding of His love, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the transformative nature of faith. Let us open our hearts and minds to the echoes of truth that resound through both the Bible and the music that touches our souls.

May 5, 2024 - "All You Need Is Love" (John 15:9-17)

In this passage, Jesus emphasizes the importance of abiding in his love and loving one another as he has loved us. Just as the Beatles sang "All You Need Is Love," Jesus teaches that love is the foundation of the Christian life and the key to bearing lasting fruit.

May 12, 2024- Mother's Day - "Because You Loved Me" (John 17:6-19)

On Mother's Day, this sermon will draw parallels between the sacrificial love Jesus discusses in His prayer and the sacrificial love often shown by mothers. The Celine Dion song "Because You Loved Me" reflects how love empowers and uplifts, shaping lives and echoing Jesus' prayer for His disciples to thrive through divine love.

May 19, 2024 - "Let the Music Speak" (John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15)

As we celebrate Music Sunday, we consider the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us into all truth and glorifying Christ. Like a powerful melody that touches the soul, the Spirit's testimony and revelation help us understand and embrace the gospel message, empowering us to be witnesses for Christ.

May 26, 2024 - "Born to Be Wild" (John 3:1-17)

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of being born again by the Spirit. As the song "Born to Be Wild" speaks of a desire for a new way of life, Jesus invites us to experience a spiritual rebirth that leads to a life of freedom, adventure, and purpose in God's kingdom.

May the truths we have discovered through these passages continue to resonate in our hearts and minds, and leave this series with a renewed commitment to follow Him, abide in Him, and love others as He has loved us. Thank you for joining us on this journey, and may God bless you abundantly as you continue to walk with Him.

From the Desk of Pastor Jonathan

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Let us take a moment to reflect on the challenges and triumphs we have experienced during the past month. April has been a time of both heartache and hope, as some of our members have faced the difficult news of illness, while others have witnessed the miraculous healing hand of God. Through it all, we have seen the unwavering faithfulness of our Heavenly Father, who love and care for us remain constant.

In Psalm 36, David extols the steadfast love and faithfulness of God, which extend to the heavens and reach the clouds. This powerful image reminds us that no matter what trials or uncertainties we may face, God's love and faithfulness are boundless and unshakable.

When we find ourselves in the midst of suffering or adversity, it can be easy to question God's goodness or to feel distant from God's presence. However, as the Christian missionary and author Elisabeth Elliot reminds us, "God never withholds from His child that which His love and wisdom call good. God's refusals are always merciful – 'severe mercies' at times but mercies all the same." Even in the darkest of valleys, we can trust that God is working all things together for our ultimate good and his glory.

Moreover, as we navigate the challenges of life, we can find comfort and strength in the fellowship of our church community. As the apostle Paul writes in Galatians 6:2, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." When we come alongside one another in prayer, support, and encouragement, we embody the love and unity of Christ, and we experience the healing balm of Christian fellowship.

In the midst of these trying times, we also have reason to rejoice and give thanks, as we have welcomed new members into our church family. It is a blessing to see our congregation grow and to embrace these brothers and sisters in Christ. As our church family expands, let us continue to foster a spirit of love, unity, and hospitality, making every effort to create a welcoming and nurturing environment where all can grow in their faith and find their place in the body of Christ.

So, my dear church family, let us fix our eyes on the steadfast love and faithfulness of our God, even in the midst of trials and uncertainties. Let us cling to the promise that, as the psalmist declares, "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." (Psalm 145:18) May we continue to uplift one another in prayer, to bear one another's burdens, and to celebrate the victories and healings that God graciously brings into our lives.

As we move forward into the month of May, I am reminded of the words of the great preacher A.W. Tozer: "The sovereign God wants to be loved for Himself and honored for Himself, but that is only part of what He wants. The other part is that He wants us to know that when we have Him we have everything – we have all the rest." May we find our ultimate hope, peace, and joy in the loving arms of our steadfast and faithful God.

With a heart full of hope and hands ready to serve,

Cansistary Carner

BY SHIRLEY ASSELMEIER

It is hard to believe we have traveled a third of the year through our Church Calendar year. The Consistory continues to oversee the financial picture of the church and review the way things are being done to carry out the ministry of St. Paul.

We have started a few new small groups to meet the needs of members in our congregation. The "Fund Raising" team has worked hard to have a very successful rummage sale, with the proceeds going to subsidize our annual budget. The Consistory is in awe of the dedication by this team, hours spent and the manual labor provided by participants to make this event successful. GREAT JOB!

We lost a staff person to retirement in February causing the Consistory to take time to evaluate this financial position along with the staffing of our Church Office. Items are being reviewed and considered to make our staffing more in line with the needs of the congregation. Work continues in this area and discussions have begun about other staffing issues for St. Paul.

Our financial situation seems to be improving and this is where the Consistory is asking for your help over the summer months. The summer months bring a time for school to be out and time for vacations and family time together. This is an important time of the year for strengthening our family bonds, so make the most of all the things open to your family to do, including enrolling your child in this year's Vacation Bible School.

Also, as you plan your summer, remember to take time to attend worship to rejuvenate your soul; or perhaps when on vacation, plan to attend worship in another church. Lastly, we ask you to remember the expenses for upkeep on our church will continue. Please try to keep up your financial commitments to St. Paul through the summer months. It will be greatly appreciated to carry on the continued ministry we are accustomed to here at St. Paul.

The Consistory would like to congratulate all our members who will be graduating from high school or college, as one part of their life is complete and they begin a new phase going forward.

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER WITH YOUR FAMILY!

PAGE 4

Board of Mission and Stewardship

BY LYNDA SAUER

This congregation is so generous! Our March mission was Food Justice, and we collected more than \$400 toward helping the food debt at our Columbia Schools. Thank you.

April's mission is the Rummage Sale and TWIGS. TWIGS is the summer lunch program for children who do not have access to lunch when school is not in session. There is a box in the Welcome Center for your donations.

Our May mission will be Foster Care awareness. Monroe County has two groups to help families. Safe Families helps families on a temporary basis. It is short term hosting of kids to avoid foster care.

RESTORE NETWORK changing the culture of foster care

Restore Network is a support group for foster kids and parents. They have a clothes closet and accept gift cards. We will be collecting diapers, pull-ups, duffle bags, fidget and sensory items like weighted stuffed animals. They also need blankets, pajamas, kids books, and monetary donations are always helpful as well.

They also have an Amazon wish list: //www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1UBS710Y66DOO6?ref_=wl_share

We will have collection containers in the Welcome Center and at the back door area. We thank you so much for your generosity!!

Board of Evangelism

BY CARRIE CLAYTON

I recently attended a Messy Church conference held in Chicago and one of the workshops I went to was titled: "Truly Welcoming: Creating Environments for Unchurched People." I personally prefer the term "someone seeking a community of faith" over "unchurched people." During the workshop, we delved into the three key aspects of hospitality essential for fostering a welcoming atmosphere in your church: Providing a Safe Place, Valuing People, and Radiating Joyful Energy. In the upcoming pathfinder articles, I will explore each of these aspects to offer insights on welcoming new individuals to our church and connecting with our local community. Our aim is to establish a vibrant faith community that invites individuals and encourages them to explore God's love and the reciprocal relationship between them and God. Stay tuned for upcoming workshops on creating a welcoming faith community here at St. Paul.



And coming soon...

- June The Second Mrs. Astor by Shana Abe
- July Under the Magnolias by T. I. Lowe
- August An American Beauty by Shana Abe
- September The Local Woman Missing by Kubica
- October The Woman by Kristin Hannah
- November West With Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge
- December Christmas Bells by Jennifer Chiaverini

St. Paul UCC Book Club meets monthly on the 4th Monday of the month. All are welcome to join.

This month will feature:

• May - The Heaven and Earth Grocery Shop by James McBride

A story of immigrant Jews and African Americans living side by side in a dilapidated neighborhood in Chicken Hill, Pennsylvania and share ambitions, sorrows, and secrets. They live on the margins of white Christian America and struggle to survive. A murder mystery (the discovery of a body in a well) is also locked inside this novel.



March 3- 102 March 6- 138 (Lenten Wednesday)- 56 March 10- 156 March 13 -(Lenten Wednesday)- 67 March 17- 137 March 20-(Lenten Wednesday)- 93 March 24- 142 March 31- 40- Easter Sunrise March 31-184 Easter Service-

Care Connection by Joanne Counce You are Never alone

Recently, Columbia EMT's presented the program of extra safety for Columbia residents. They provide a type of lock box to be placed on your desired door in case police or ambulance are needed to get into your home and you cannot respond and get to the door. This may be that a neighbor noticed no usual activity around your home, or a family member living a distance away cannot make contact with you, or that you pressed you Lifeline/Medical Alert button. Having access to your home enables the responders to get to you faster without damage to your property. Recommendations have always been to provide your health care information including medication, physician, health issues, and family to be notified to be placed on your refrigerator since this is the first place the responders will look for your needs. In that case, it is very important to include a copy of your end of life wishes as well. A Do Not Resuscitate document should be on the refrigerator since the EMT's are there to help and will start CPR. If that is not your wishes, it needs to be in writing! Now the Columbia EMS provides a magnetic card for you to provide all information and place on the refrigerator.

The lock box can be obtained by either asking the church to help you contact the Columbia EMS 618-281-4163 or you can contact them.

A sign-up sheet will be in the Welcome Center for both items you would like to request as well.





LIFE IS ABOUT BALANCE

You don't always need to be getting stuff done! Sometimes it's perfectly okay and necessary To shut down, kick back, and do nothing!

Hospitality Committee



by Shirley Myers

Thanks to all who helped make our soup suppers a success this year. We served 39 gallons of soup and over 200 grilled cheese sandwiches.

Special Recognitions

- Cafe on the Abbey for their delicious soups
- Denise, Faye, Judy, the After School Kids and the Girl Scouts for making so many grilled cheese sandwiches
- The St. Paul Hospitality Committee for all of their help- Judy, Mary, Lea, Evelyn, Jane, Mona, Sandy, Delores, Celeste, Linda, and Erlene
- To all committees that sponsored and provided all of the desserts and help with the cleanup
- Dean Riebeling for providing the beautiful yellow tulips on Maundy Thursday.

St. Paul United Church of Christ 175th Anniversary Picnic

SAVE THE DATE We will be having a picnic on Sunday, June 9 to celebrate our 175th anniversary. It will be after the church service, held as usual in the sanctuary. The picnic, beginning at 11:30 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m., will be at the large pavilion in City Park (across from the tennis courts).

Lunch and soft drinks will be provided. Members of the Graceful Motherhood Fellowship and the Next Chapter Mom's Fellowship are bringing games and Pastor Julie and the Youth Fellowship are bringing a cool treat to share. Bring lawn chairs, if you'd like, and be ready to celebrate our anniversary with memories to share.

Sign up sheets will be in the Welcome Center and the Church Office.



Nathan Schnittger U.S. Army Nephew of Cathy Huels

Roberto DeMarquez Army National Guard Son of Ursula DeMarquez

Jack Augustin U.S Army Son of Jason & Shelly Augustin

Sean Parrin Army Ranger - Italy Nephew of Jody & Jeff Taake



Director of Christian Ed Denise Johnson

Youth updates and important information

Vacation Bible School

Time to Register for Vacation Bible School Camp Firelight June 10-14 9:00 am to Noon Register using this link or QR Code https://www.stpaulcolumbia.org/event-registration.html

During Vacation Bible School, we will join Counselor Sam and Lume the lightning bug puppet, for a summer adventure at Camp Fireligh accompany Counselor Sam and Lu as they learn to face their fears while trusting in God. We will explore timeless Bible stories showing how Old and New Testament Bible figures trusted God, faced their fears, and went on to do wonderful things in God's name. As we experience the stories through music, drama and storytelling, games, arts and crafts, science, and even snacks, we will learn ways to connect with and trust God. And best of all, we will understand how we can connect with God at VBS, church, home, and every area of our lives. We are invited on an exciting journey where will we learn to trust God no matter what situation life brings, know God is always with us, and feel confident in sharing the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ. Adults and Youth entering sixth grade to twelfth grade in the fall can be volunteers! Please contact Denise Johnson for questions or to volunteer at christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org or 618-340-2952







Messy Church

A Messy team of six headed to Chicago to Celebrate the Mess!

A conference that helped us create, grow and celebrate the ways Jesus meets us in the mess. We cultivated community, connected, worshiped and listened to see where God is leading us in our next year of Messy Church.

Join us for our next Messy Church in May!

Thursday, May 30 5:30 pm





We will be celebrating "Senior Recognition Sunday" on Sunday, May 19, at our 9:30 am church service. During the service, we will invite our graduates to the front of the sanctuary, where they will be recognized, honored, and blessed. A special gift will be presented to each senior. After the service, we will celebrate in the Fellowship Hall with refreshments provided by the Board of Christian Education, and the congregation will have a chance to congratulate the Class of 2024.

Summer Camp at Camp DuBois

It's time to unplug and jump into a week of awesome, low-tech fun. At Dubois Center kids can be kids and get dirty, have fun and make memories that last a lifetime. Camp is about connecting face to face with cabin-mates and leaders. Camp is a safe place to try new things, learn about God and grow as a person. Camp is a place to laugh, sing, play and pray together.

For more information go to: www.DuBoisCenter.org

Note: **St. Paul covers half of the cost of sending your child to camp.** Fill out the registration form, pay your half of the camp fee to DuBois Center, make a copy of the registration form and turn it in to the church office.

Give your child the gift of a faith-filled summer camp experience this year.



SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, July 30

SOS Spirit of Sharing Soup Kitchen in Collinsville has been serving their community since June 7, 2012. St. John UCC was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Soup Kitchen Coalition. They reached out to other congregations and civic organizations to join to serve a hot meal every Tuesday at First United Methodist Church, and every Thursday at St. John EUCC in Collinsville, from 5 - 6:30 p.m. Their ministry is a ministry of love and compassion, feeding not only those who are hungry but those in need of fellowship, too. Close to two hundred meals are served each Tuesday and Thursday. Our church has been asked to host on Tuesday, July 30. We will be making, serving, and cleaning up. Our menu is chicken salad sandwiches, fresh fruit, chips, and dessert. This service project can be done at our church kitchen and at the Collinsville First Methodist Church. Our church van will provide transportation. If you are interested in helping serve and show love to our neighbors in Collinsville, please contact Denise Johnson or Pastor Julie Kies. SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI

May

SAT

| | | |] 9 am Preschool 10am Morning Bells 3:30 pm Kids Crew 6pm Evening Bells 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir | 2 9am Preschool 5:30 pm Youth Night 6pm Cub Scouts 7pm Executive Committee | 3 8 am Quilters | 4 8am Men's Group 10 am Faith Recharge Class |
|---|---|--|--|---|---------------------|--|
| 5 Kindercottage Collections 9:30 Worship & communion 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time 10:45 Mindfulness Meditation | O 10 am Staff Mtg 6 pm Band Practice | 7 9 am Preschool 6pm Daisy Scouts 7pm Graceful Motherhood Fellowship 7pm Next Chapter Moms | 8 9 am Preschool 10am Morning Bells 3:30 pm Kids Crew 6pm Evening Bells 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir | 9 9 am Preschool 7 pm Evangelism 7pm Cemetery | 10 8 am Quilters | 11 |
| 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School | 13 10 am Staff Mtg 6pm Band Keystone O'Fallon 6pm Daisy Troop 449 6pm Finance 7pm Consistory | 14 | 15 9 am Preschool 10am Morning Bells 3:30 pm Kids Crew 6pm Girl Scout Troop Leader Mtg 6pm Evening Bells 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir | 16 5:30 pm Youth Night 7pm Pastoral Relations | 17 8 am Quilters | 18 10 am Faith Recharge Class |
| 19 Music Sunday 9:30 Worship and Baptism 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time | 20 10 am Staff Meeting 7pm Book Club 7:30 pm Board of Worship | 21 7pm Graceful Motherhood Fellowship 7pm Next Chapter Mom's Group | 22 6pm Confirmation | 23 | 24 8 am Quilters | 25 |
| 26 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time | 27 NENGRIAL DAY Church Office Closed | 28 | 29 6pm Confirmation | 30 5:30 pm Messy Church | 31 8 am Quilters | |



Kindercottage Holds Trivia Night Fundraiser May 18 6:00pm - 10:00pm at St. Paul UCC 115 W. B St, Belleville, IL 62220. \$20 per ticket or table of 8 for \$160 and includes water and soda. Mulligans available, 50/50, Silent Auction, Table Decorating Contest, too! Bring your own snacks. For more information, call Aimee Hart or Antron Rose at (618) 874-6505. Please note-- the address to mail checks is: 564 Veronica Ave, East St. Louis, IL 62205 attn: Trivia Night.

Events and News from Illinois South Conference





Annual St. John UCC Golf Tournament Saturday, May 18 at Acorns Golf Links. Four person scramble with 8:00am Shotgun Start. \$100/golfer- skins, mulligans, and lunch included. Contact Brad Ripplemeyer (618)580-4166 or Dan McCarthy (618)593-6971 for more information.

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 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 623 Hamacher St Waterloo, IL 62298 618-939-3488

Financial Report

| | Marc | h | Year to Date | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | 2023 | <u>2024</u> |
| Revenue | | | | |
| Tithes & Offerings: | | | | |
| Pledged & NonPledged | 34,465.00 | 47,923.00 | 100,585.54 | 114,169.87 |
| Misc. Contributions | 1,955.00 | 5,176.00 | 2,965.00 | 5,822.00 |
| Interest Income | 127.21 | 1,569.08 | 820.88 | 2,292.14 |
| Endowment Interest Income | 0.00 | 0.00 | 13,673.91 | 13,928.30 |
| Rental Income | 0.00 | 350.00 | 850.00 | 350.00 |
| Misc Income | 7,419.00 | 4,620.00 | 9,962.94 | 12,957.43 |
| Total Revenues | 43,966.21 | 59,638.08 | 128,858.27 | 149,519.74 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Personnel | 31,672.66 | 30,244.58 | 96,314.59 | 95,859.51 |
| General Expenses | 13,766.50 | 15,194.58 | 50,069.27 0.00 | 32,827.18 |
| * OCWM | 2,232.44 | 2,232.44 | 0.00 | 6,487.74 |
| Total Expenses | 63,574.07 | 47,671.60 | 146,383.86 | 135,174.43 |
| Net Receipts | (19,607.86) | 11,966.48 | (17,525.59) | 14,345.31 |
| RESERVES | | | 78,930.03 | 98,605.88 |
| *OCWM 10,000.00 out of St Paul | Mission (833.33 | month ly) | | |
| | | | | |

Our Members in Nursing Homes

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 financial@stpaulcolumbia.org

Christian Education Director Denise Johnson - christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org

Lead Custodian Terry Schramm – custodian@stpaulcolumbia.org Custodian, Madison Shoellhorn 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 cemetery@stpaulcolumbia.org

Consistory Members

President - Susan Hibbits Vice President - Diana Kleinschmidt Secretary - Wendy Stout Shirley Asselmeier Susie Busch Rob Dehn Diane Hanna Susan Kuergeleis Faye Mehrmann Paul Tarr Mark Thompson Chris Trowbridge