

## From Pastor Shel

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul UCC,

The article you will read below was written by the **Conference Minister of our Illinois South Conference, Rev. Shana Johnson**. It was published in the Illinois South Conference "Weekly Connections" in late spring prior to Rev. Johnson's sabbatical leave. We feel that she speaks to our families, especially in this "season of return"...to school, to Sunday School, to Confirmation, to the After School Program, and Youth Fellowships. While it is a longer article than we usually print in the "Pathfinder" it reflects what our church is called to be as we birth, love, raise, and affirm our many generations of faith. Please enjoy this reflection from Rev. Shana Johnson.

### An Open Letter to Parents About What Children Learn from Being Part of a Church

Dear Parents,

As a mother of two twenty-something children, I have been thinking quite a bit about the experiences I was able to provide them growing up. As a parent of adult children, I delight in seeing how my girls are becoming comfortable in their skin and navigating the complexities of adulthood. I marvel at their maturity, tenacity, and deep faith.

I recently realized one of the best gifts I was able to give them was the experience of life in the Church. At each age, they learned valuable lessons that equipped them in their relationships with themselves, others, and the Divine.

#### *In the early years*

Before they were even born, people in the church prayed for and celebrated their arrival. At their baptisms, the church promised to support their parents in raising them in the faith. As squirming, sometimes screaming toddlers, they learned that even if dad took them out of the sanctuary for a moment, they would return to experience the music, the flow, and rhythm of a worship service. They experienced a sense of the Holy before they could fully understand or articulate what it meant to be in the presence of God.

#### *In the grade school years*

Members of the church introduced them to Bible stories through Vacation Bible School songs, Sunday School classes, children's sermons, and Christmas pageants. They discovered they were never too young to volunteer. If they asked how they could help, people would take them up on the offer. Whether it was pulling weeds on a clean-up day or pulling the wagon to deliver the chicken from the fry shack to the fellowship hall where paying customers were waiting for their meals—they could share in the work. They learned how to strike up conversations as they sat at fellowship tables with church members.

#### *In the mid-school years*

They got comfortable with public speaking through reading scripture, participating in plays and skits, and sharing their confirmation faith presentation in worship. They experienced the joy and comfort of having older adults in the congregation who became like additional grandparents. In the beginning stage of awkward adolescence, they felt seen and accepted in the church in a way they didn't always feel at school.

#### *In the high school years*

They unplugged for a week or two on mission trips. These trips took them out of their comfort zone as they stayed in unfamiliar spaces and places, worked with their hands, and came home with a different perspective and appreciation for their life. Through leadership roles in the church, they developed organizational skills and a sense of how broader systems fit together.

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*In their teenage years*, it was in the church that they learned life's complex realities. Death is a part of life and can happen unexpectedly, even to young people. They experienced the church as a human institution, and as such, people (even highly respected leaders) are fallible. And even though people try to bring their best selves to church, their worst selves often come out at church.

*As young adults*

My girls now realize that the things that come naturally (and one might take for granted) are byproducts and gifts of being raised in the church.

They know how to relate to people of every age.

They know how to work hard and contribute to the whole.

They know everyone has a unique God-given gift to share--gifts that the world needs.

They know that when someone dies, if possible, you go to the funeral or send flowers or a card to show this person's life mattered.

They know everyone will face difficult times.

They know everyone will make mistakes, but no one should be judged and remembered for their worst decision.

They know the Church is not God, and the Church is an imperfect place where God's perfect grace can be experienced.

The world is full of quirky people (including themselves) whom God created and in whom God takes delight.

They know they can make a difference in the world by doing small things with great love.

They know that faith will carry them through whatever disappointment or crisis they face.

Ultimately, they know that God's love can be stronger than all that could divide us.

Dear parents, I know there are so many things clamoring for your attention and our children's attention. It can be challenging to have little ones in the pews with you, and it can be tempting to sleep in on Sunday mornings. By the time your child hits grade school, others might convince you that your time is better spent in activities and events that you think will help your child get ahead in life or get scholarships to college. But, dear parents, as my girls have often shared with me, the lessons they learned in the Church can be valuable beyond measure.

Blessings,  
Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister  
Illinois South Conference, UCC

*Rev. Johnson has returned from a time of sabbatical and will be reviewing our church profile for certification. The profile will then be sent to the National UCC offices to be made available for prospective pastoral candidates. If you are interested in learning about how we see ourselves through the lens of the **Transition Team**, and our congregational input through the questionnaire we participated in last spring, please stop off in the Welcome Center to **read the profile** on July 31 and August 7.*

*As our new Search Committee begins their work, Rev. Johnson will meet with us for training in the next steps of the process. Please hold her, the Search Committee, and St. Paul UCC in your prayers.*

*Pastor Shel*

## **Consistory Corner**

It's mid-summer, a time when gardens are growing, folks are heading out for vacation, and there are barbecues and picnics galore! It is, indeed, wonderful to have time with family and friends even in the hot, hot weather!! And it is equally glorious to know that our church continues to move forward with many projects through these dog days of summer.

If you haven't had a chance yet, we hope you can take a few minutes to see the new windows! The installation is complete, and we are grateful to all those who supported this project. In addition to looking great, they provide significant improvement in our energy efficiency!!

The Consistory continues its focus on the search process for our new pastor. In fact, by the time you read this, you will have had the opportunity to see the

slate of Search Committee members the Consistory developed. The list of nominees from the congregation was tremendous, and all of them had wonderful qualifications. In the end, the Consistory believes that the Search Committee members will represent us well and do an outstanding job of helping us find a pastor that is the best fit for our congregation, and who will help us become what we want for our church future!!

*Susan Hibbits*

## **Pastoral Search Committee**

Congratulations and a sincere "THANK YOU!" to our members who were identified by the Consistory in late June, and approved unanimously to serve as our Pastoral Search Committee on July 17, following worship, in a duly called meeting of the congregation.

We hold in gratitude and prayer:

Myron Hanna, Chairperson  
Jim Busch  
Joanne Counce  
Curt Harres  
Colleen Jackson  
Sherry Montgomery  
Keith Myers  
Tiffany Riley  
Becky Trexler

Our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson will be training the Search Committee this month. Pastor Shel will be working with them as they focus on the process. Once they begin receiving pastoral profiles she will not be engaged in any way, except to respond to questions about the process.

Again, thanks to the members who accepted this call to serve St. Paul. Thank you to the Consistory for their wise discernment in the process of selection. Thank you to the congregation of "lifting up" so many wonderful names for the Consistory to consider. We are truly in this together.

*Pastor Shel*

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
*and thank you*

## Hello Church - Pastor Julie!

### 2023 Confirmation News

It's not too late to sign up for Confirmation Class. Join Pastor Shel, Pastor Julie and Miss Denise for a fascinating journey of faith and church! Together we will attempt to answer your burning questions like: "How can God be 3 and 1 at the same time?" "What's so special about the UCC?" and "Why is there a winged lion and goat on our front door?" Please Contact Pastor Julie or Denise Johnson to let us know you will join us at the Welcome Dinner on Wednesday, August 24. Classes will meet on Wednesdays following at 6:00 pm.



Thank you to all who participated in the Spirit of Sharing (SOS) service project. We had a fun time! Our intrepid adult volunteers started the prep work a day ahead, but there was much to do— cutting up fruits, vegetables and chicken; and assembling it all into a delicious summer supper. On site at First Presbyterian Church in Collinsville we really pulled together as a team, prepping individual take-away containers, complete with cake for dessert. Thank you, also, to our cake donators! We distributed 85 meals to hungry folks in Collinsville.

Our Service project was a success and now it is time for us to plan some fun. Parents & youth, keep an eye on your family email for a survey and upcoming event announcement!

*Pastor Julie*



### Board of Mission & Stewardship

A huge thank you for all your donations during July for the community of Mayfield, Kentucky as they recover from the tornado damages last December. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas in July Appreciation Luncheon held on July 24.

For our August mission, it's that time again. School will be in session very soon, so we are collecting **school supplies**. There will be boxes or baskets at the back entrance, in the Welcome Center and in the Narthex. These supplies will be distributed to Kinder Cottage, Hoyleton Ministries and the House of Neighborly Service.



# Director of Christian Education

Denise Johnson

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 Children's Chat, at the 9:30 a.m. worship service, on Sunday, August 21. If you unable to attend, plan watch live stream or later at your convenience, on the church website- [www.stpaulcolumbia.org](http://www.stpaulcolumbia.org). We ask that all families keep this ritual by blessing your children's backpacks.

Any youth who is entering eighth grade in the fall is invited to participate in our Confirmation Program. In June we had a preliminary meeting for 2023 Confirmands and parents. There is still time to sign up! To register for our Confirmation Program please go to our website:

**www: stpaulcolumbia.org**

Please Contact Pastor Julie or Denise Johnson if you have any questions.

Please plan to attend the **Confirmation Welcome Dinner at 6 p.m., Wednesday, August 24**, for all confirmands, parents, Faith Partners, and church staff.

**Faith Formation Celebration** is planned for Sunday, September 11, at 9:30 a.m. 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!

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, like 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, fixing, 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 at our **Volunteer Appreciation Brunch** on Sunday, September 11, will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. RSVP by text, email or call to Denise Johnson 618-340-2952 or [christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org](mailto:christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org)

## ST. PAUL WEDNESDAY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM BEGINS SEPTEMBER 14

**(3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)** 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 Middle School.

**Kid's Crew** members enjoy snacks, go for walks, play games, mission projects, and grow 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](http://www.stpaulcolumbia.org)

For questions you may contact:

Denise Johnson

Cell 618-340-2952

Email: [christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org](mailto:christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org)





For those of you who don't know me, my name is *Ella Riley*. The Board of Mission and Stewardship asked me to speak with you today about my experience with Mayfield, KY since their July Mission is raising donations for UCC Disaster Ministries which is helping support the people of Mayfield.

My father's family is from Kentucky. They all grew up in a town called Fancy Farm which is just south of Mayfield, KY. All of my Dad's siblings still live in and around that area - some of whom have moved even closer and live in Mayfield now. When the news of the tornado broke, our first thoughts were to reach out and make sure they were all safe. They were shook up by it all, but were unscathed and had little damage to their homes. We were certainly grateful to hear that!

It was hard watching the news and seeing the pictures as we were so familiar with all the places they were showing - City Hall, the businesses around the town square, and many more. And then it struck me that it was so close to Christmas and I knew from experience with my Aunts that a lot of people in Mayfield start buying gifts in summer and put them in layaway because they can't afford to buy things all at once. My Mom and I talked about the children and wondered what goes through their minds. How many families had just lost their homes as well as the gifts they had purchased for their children?

We felt like we needed to do something.

My Aunt works in a family medicine clinic in Mayfield and we contacted her to see if she knew of any families that were in need of help as we wanted to "adopt" them and provide them with a Christmas. We originally were given one family with 2 children - a boy and a girl. We got to work contacting neighbors and family members who might have children around the same age to get some clothing donations, shoes, etc.... And then we found out that the family was no longer in need of help as extended family was going to be helping them and they didn't want to take away from another family who might need help. By then, the plans were already in motion and people were calling and texting with items to donate. The family we ended up supporting was a younger couple with a 10 year old son. So many friends and family members of ours wanted to help that we ended up with 2 carloads full of items to donate as well as wrapped Xmas gifts for each family member to open on Xmas day. We were also able to collect \$675 in money and gift cards.

The best part of this story is seeing the look of gratitude on the mother's face when we met her in a church parking lot outside Mayfield. She had no idea who we were and we had no idea who she was other than they needed our help. We had so much to give her that we ended up having to follow her to her parent's house where she was staying. Her father was just as grateful as she was. They were both tearful. We didn't meet her husband or their son as they were in a back room of the

house so he wouldn't see the wrapped gifts we were bringing in. She also told us that her sister had lost everything as well and had 3 children and if we didn't mind, she wanted to share with them too.

The story for me is a powerful one as it is a gentle reminder of how blessed we are and also how our actions can change someone's lives. December seems like a long time ago and there are no more news stories about the people of Mayfield. But we must remember that tragic events like this tornado do not go away in a few days or a few months. It will take a long time for the people of Mayfield to recover. Please consider donating this month to the UCC Disaster Ministries Fund. Thank you.

## Board of Evangelism Events

### **Pumpkin Hunt**

The Pumpkin Hunt is returning! It will be held on October 22, starting at 6:00 p.m. at Legion Hall. We will feature many of the favorite events from past Pumpkin Hunts—the hunt, raffles, a silent auction, lots of prizes and a few surprises.

Save the date of October 22 for a fun evening! If you or your board would like to contribute an auction basket, please contact Karen Kirk, Dolores Hooch, Brenda Schlemmer or Diane Hanna. Ticket information will be in September's Pathfinder. If you've never attended, come and experience the fun. If you've been to the Hunt before, come back and bring some friends!

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## Board of Evangelism Events

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### **Everybody's Birthday Lunch**

The Board of Evangelism is sponsoring an **Everybody's Birthday Lunch** in the Fellowship Hall on September 18, following worship. Schubert's will be catering a meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, tossed house salad and sheet cake. Coffee, tea and lemonade will be available. The meal will cost \$18 per person. Tickets will be sold between August 21 – September 11, before and after worship. Or they may be purchased in the church office during the week. or in the church office. Everybody's Birthday Lunch is a way to bring folks from the congregation together for a fun occasion, allowing us to mingle and meet those people we may see on a Sunday morning that we don't really know. Please join us and celebrate Everybody's Birthday!

## CARE CONNECTION

-Joanne Counce

*Covid-19 and How It Affects You*

It has been many months since I have included anything about Covid-19, for my article. With the new variants of BA4 and BA5 being added to Omicron, COVID-19 is making a comeback with the new variants being much more contagious. We have seen this in our own church staff during the month of July. DuBois Campers were unable to attend for a week of camp this summer due to a staff member at DuBois having COVID-19 which closed the entire camp for cleaning etc. There were not enough weeks left in the summer for the kids to be able to make up that week. The New Athens Home of the Aged, which is a nonprofit home that our own church has supported, is now being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting from staff shortages, and operational violations. These residents all must now be relocated to other facilities, which is traumatic for them, their families, and the laid-off staff. Our prayers are needed for their support.

We hear that a new booster may be coming in the fall for the new variants, but doctors are encouraging those who qualify to get any booster now. Each age group and the different vaccines have different qualifications of the time period to wait for boosters but adults ages 50 and over may receive the second booster four months after the first booster. If you have any questions, look online at cdc.gov. All local pharmacies are offering the boosters. Monroe County Health Department offers any needed booster appointments by calling 618-612-6695. KEEP ON BOOSTIN'!

### Property Management News:

After 14 years of faithful service, Dale Stumpf has retired from the Property Committee. Dale was always available to lend a hand to any job that the committee was doing. His ready smile, excellent help where needed and always sunny attitude will be truly missed. Best Wishes to both he and Carol!

	June		Year to Date	
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>				
<i>Fines &amp; Offerings:</i>				
<b>Pledged &amp; Non-Pledged</b>	24,776.00	27,548.00	181,663.82	194,746.37
<b>Misc. Contributions</b>	2.00	50.00	4,501.00	5,447.00
<b>Interest Income</b>	0.00	686.48	1,735.43	2,409.83
<b>Endowment Interest Income</b>	0.00	0.00	25,991.08	27,476.17
<b>Rental Income</b>	0.00	0.00	500.00	300.00
<b>Misc Income</b>	578.57	476.25	12,568.47	7,179.92
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>25,356.57</b>	<b>28,760.73</b>	<b>226,959.80</b>	<b>237,559.29</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	25,138.54	28,367.70	149,666.80	171,988.96
<b>General Expenses</b>	15,086.66	18,619.98	48,693.59	68,517.39
<b>OCWM</b>	<u>2,781.50</u>	<u>2,277.69</u>	<u>14,794.64</u>	<u>16,042.80</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>43,006.70</b>	<b>49,265.37</b>	<b>213,155.03</b>	<b>256,549.15</b>
<b>Net Receipts</b>	<b>(17,650.13)</b>	<b>(20,504.64)</b>	<b>13,804.77</b>	<b>(18,989.86)</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>			<b>127,724.25</b>	<b>103,400.77</b>

\*OCWM 10,000.00 out of St Paul Mission (833.33 monthly)

**Solar Loan Balance      50,778.34**

**Our Members in Senior Living**

**Garden Place Of Columbia**

*Clarice Giffhorn*  
*Ed Schutte*  
*Grace Volkert*  
480 DD Rd.  
Columbia, IL 62236  
618-281-4200

**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 Apt 122  
Waterloo, IL 62298



***Helen Esther Byers***  
**January 16, 1925 – June 28, 2022**

***Vera “Wanda” Bayer***  
**February 27, 1928 — July 5, 2022**

**Our Members in Nursing Homes**

**Integrity**

*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

**Community Cancer Support Group**

The Village Support Group is a new free monthly meeting for individuals with a cancer diagnosis. This is a positive, uplifting meeting to share journeys and support one another. A facilitator is there as well to support and provide help as needed. If you would like to attend, please message us here on Facebook or leave a message on the HNS Help Line at 618-939-8680. Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month at 6 pm at the HNS office, 217 West Mill, Waterloo. Stay positive and know that we are here for you, and you are NEVER alone!

**Military Prayers**

**Nathan Schnittger**  
U.S. Army  
Nephew of Cathy Huels

**Roberto DeMarquez**  
Army National Guard  
Son of Ursula DeMarquez

**Marine Sgt.**  
**James K. Combs**  
Son of Jim & Debbie Combs

**Jack Augustin**  
**Army**  
Son of Jason & Shelly Augustin

**Sean Parrin**  
Army - Ft. Polk, LA  
Nephew of Jody & Jeff Taake

**Matthew Gage Toler**  
USMC, deployed to Syria,  
Great Nephew of  
Margie Lindhorst

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7 pm Board of Mission & Stewardship	2 Pastor Shel's Day Off	3	4 7 pm Personnel Committee 8 pm Executive Committee	5 8 am Quilters	6
7 <b>Holy Communion</b> <b>Kindercottage Food Collection</b> 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee & Donut Hour	8 6:15 pm Finance Committee 7 pm Consistory	9 Pastor Shel's Day Off	10	11 7 pm Cemetery Board	12 8 am Quilters	13
14 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee & Donut Hour	15 Pathfinder Articles Due Today 7 pm Board of Worship	16 Pastor Shel's Day Off	17	18 7 pm Board of Evangelism	19 8 am Quilters	20 Columbia Days Parade
21 <b>Blessing the Backpacks</b> 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee & Donut	22 7 pm Board of Worship 7 pm Book Club	23 Pastor Shel's Day Off	24 6 pm <b>Confirmation Welcome Dinner</b>	25	26 8 am Quilters	27 9 am –noon <b>Youth Car Wash</b>
28 <b>Confirmation Covenant</b> 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee & Donut Hour	29	30 Pastor Shel's Day Off	31 6 pm <b>Confirmation</b>			

Please send Pathfinder articles by the 15th of each month to:  
[articles@stpaulcolumbia.org](mailto:articles@stpaulcolumbia.org)



**BOOK CLUB**

**August 22 - 7 pm**  
*Emily's House*  
 by Amy Belding Brown



**THE PATHFINDER**

**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 Barb in the office by email (see below) or call 618-281-5102.

**Staff Contact Information:**

Intentional Interim Senior Pastor - Rev. Sheldon Culver srpastor@stpaulcolumbia.org  
Interim Associate Pastor for Youth & Visitation - Rev. Julie Kies - assocpastor@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 Bells Director, Patti French  
Preschool Director, Jody Taake - preschool@stpaulcolumbia.org  
Cemetery Treasurer, Barb Gerstenecker - cemetery@stpaulcolumbia.org

**CONSISTORY MEMBERS**

President - Dennis Hoguet  
Vice President - Shirley Bergmann  
Secretary - Shirley Hoy  
Shirley Asselmeier  
Carrie Clayton  
Gregg Giffhorn  
Susan Hibbits  
Mary Hillestad  
Charles James  
Susan Kuergeleis  
Mark Thompson  
Al Wolfe

**SUMMER OFFICE HOURS:**  
**Monday - Thursday**  
**9 a.m. - noon**