

THE PATHFINDER

“Where is he
who has been born
king of the Jews?
For we saw his star when it rose
and have come to worship him.”



A Note to the Congregation

FROM PASTOR SHEL

I asked the Consistory if, for the year 2023, they would be willing to maintain the Executive Committee as now constituted:

President - Dennis Hoguet

Vice-President - Shirley Bergmann

Secretary - Shirley Hoy

My reason for making this request is to maintain stability during the interim time. The Executive Committee is working well together, and with me. This decision will also provide stability as we move into another pastoral transition. The move to maintain continuity of leadership during an interim time is common in churches, so there is precedent for doing so.

The Consistory voted to retain the Executive Committee through 2023.



“ Dear God,
Thank You for new beginnings. What an incredible day this is with a fresh year’s potential stretched out before me. I want to be found faithful this year in each and every opportunity You bring to me. Thank You, Lord, for new beginnings. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

WORSHIP TIMES AND SERVICES

Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m.

Seasonal Worship

Lent: Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.

Palm Sunday: 9:30 a.m.

Holy Week: 7:00 p.m. Service on Thursday and Friday.

Easter Sunrise Service:

Easter Sunday at 7:00 a.m. at Evangelical St. Paul Cemetery

Easter Worship:

Easter Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Thanksgiving:

Community service on Thanksgiving Eve, time and place announced each year

Christmas:

Christmas Eve services

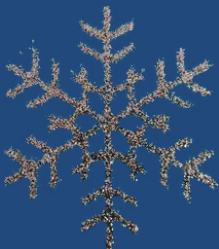
4:30 p.m. -Family Candlelight Service

9:30 p.m. -Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 p.m. Silent Night Candlelight and Meditation Service.

Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Worship and Communion



Thresholds

BY PASTOR SHEL

As 2022 recedes behind us, we eagerly stand on the threshold of a New Year, in much the same way that year has followed year for centuries. The “procession” of new years began when in 1582 Pope Gregory the Thirteenth introduced the calendar we use to this day. His correction of the older Julian calendar was to add the leap year which provides a few folk with a strange birthdate, February 29.

I am, however, more interested in exploring thresholds than calendars. A threshold speaks of passage from one place to another. It is a doorway, an opening, a place of interface between past and future. The ancient Romans honored thresholds with the god Janus. He was the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, doorways, frames, and endings. He was depicted as having two faces, one to look in each direction from a doorway. It was said that Janus saw both past and future at the same time. We recognize Janus in the name January, the month that stands at the threshold of the new year, so full of possibilities and hope.

The power of the threshold is also recognized in the Jewish tradition of the *mezuzah*, which means “doorpost”. The mezuzah is a piece of parchment contained in a decorative case that is attached to the right side of a doorway or gate. On the parchment is written verses from the best known Jewish prayer, *Shema Yisrael*, which includes the great commandment from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Verse 5, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”. Verse 9 instructs the faithful to “write these words on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” The faithful believer touches the mezuzah every time they cross the threshold.

We in our western culture cross thresholds constantly as we come and go, from homes, offices, schools and shops. Most of our crossings are casual, perhaps even unconscious. We may pause to say, “It’s good to get here”, or “great to get away from there”, but we lack a ritual sensibility about thresholds. Our comings and goings seem to be just that.

I have heard the poet, David Whyte, speak eloquently about thresholds. For him thresholds are not simply points of passage from one place to another, doors and gates that must be unlocked, opened, closed, in the service of progress. He notes that every moment is a threshold, and he invites us to become aware of what this might mean in our daily living. He asks us to become conscious of the Holy in every moment, wherever we are. Whyte reflects the truth that God abides here and now, in the present, not in some past memory, not in some future hope, but here on the very threshold where you stand. God is the doorway through which we live and move and have our being.

To be truly alive is to live with the awareness that we live in Christ, and that every moment is sacred and blessed with the “threshold sense” of existence. As we continue into the New Year, a church in transition, my prayer is that we can more fully embrace these interim months as ongoing reminders that this season may be even more spirit-filled than we have imagined. This time, a threshold between what was and what will be, is a holy season.

Blessings to you on the threshold of this new year, this new day, this very moment,

Pastor Shel



Consistory Corner

BY DENNIS HOGUET

As the new year starts let's look back on the last 12 months. St. Paul lost our Intentional Interim Minister and called a new Sr. Interim Minister (Rev. Sheldon Culver) to lead the St. Paul Congregation through this time of Pastoral Change. Rev. Culver has provided guidance and leadership that can be seen through the many accomplishments and general church attendance in 2022. St. Paul also called an Interim Associate Pastor (Rev. Julie Kies). Rev. Kies has led the visitation of the sick and homebound as well as put energy back into our Sr. High and Jr. High Youth Fellowship programs.

Church attendance on Sundays and participation in church activities, boards, and committees has been steadily increasing since May. Members that haven't been in church for a couple of years are starting to return. These are positive things that are happening that may not be easily seen or have been talked about. St. Paul also executed two (2) capital improvement projects at the same time that replaced eight (8) windows in the Narthex and replaced and / or added new signage. The St. Paul Transition Team completed the work of creating a Profile for the Sr. Pastor. The St. Paul Search Committee has started their work of utilizing the Profile to find and call a new Sr. Pastor. St. Paul welcomed 11 new members in December. St. Paul won "Best Reason for the Season" float in the Columbia Holiday Parade. These are just some of the highlights of things that occurred in 2022.

The Consistory would like to thank all of the members of St. Paul that made 2022 a success. The Consistory hopes that 2023 brings better things for you, your family and our Church family.

Happy New Year!

Pastoral Search Committee

BY MYRON HANNA

The Search Committee is continuing to meet on a regular basis. As of December 15, we have received pastoral profiles from a total of 21 candidates. Some of the candidates have withdrawn themselves from our consideration. With some candidates we reached a consensus that, for various reasons, he or she would not be a good choice for the senior pastor of our church. We do have a few candidates that we are still considering while we await receipt of additional profiles. We have conducted an initial interview with a candidate in whom we have a particular interest, and this candidate is still under consideration.

Please continue to support us with your prayers.

2022 STAR TREE HIGHLIGHTS

by Barb Gerstenecker

Thanks to the generosity of our great congregation, we were able to fulfill 136+ Christmas Wishes to those less fortunate than ourselves.

There were several different ways to help. Gifts were bought directly from Amazon. Donations in the amount of 845.00 were used to fulfil wishes. Wishes on Kindercottage's Walmart list were purchased from 345.00 in donations specific to Kindercottage. Gift card donations were used to fulfil wishes or for families. Leftover funds in the amount of 160.00 were used to purchase rolls of quarters for use in laundry mats.

It's wonderful that we can spread so much joy and goodwill. Thanks to all who brought presents or donations towards this mission. Special thanks to Santa's Elves for wrapping and delivering gifts.

I hope you had a blessed Christmas!



*Annual Congregational Meeting
January 29th, 2023*



THE TRUE LIGHT
THAT GIVES LIGHT
TO EVERYONE
WAS COMING INTO
THE WORLD
-JOHN 1:9

Honoring God's Work



CONGRATULATIONS!

to Luke Vollmert who has been accepted into the United States Peace Corps. This is an enormous achievement. Luke was baptized and confirmed at St. Paul UCC.

He has a heart for service and is clearly called to become a Peace Corps Volunteer. He will depart for his assignment in Tanzania, Africa in mid-February 2023.

On Sunday, January 22, Luke will be consecrated as a missionary from St. Paul Church during the worship service. We are excited for him, and proud that he is following his call to serve his God in this meaningful way.



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

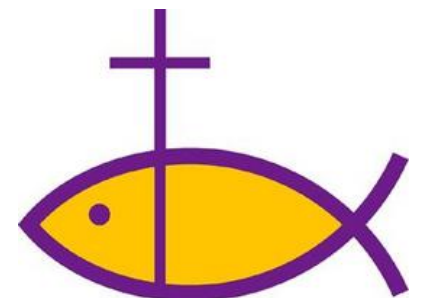
Matthew Gage Toler
USMC, deployed to Syria,
Great Nephew of
Margie Lindhorst

Confirmation News

In confirmation lessons we have been learning about faith in action and how we can get involved in our community and the world. The youth have identified concerns about plastics in our environment, the impact of poverty in people's lives and the intersection of economic and political instability. They are in a stage of inquiry to develop their group mission project for the Spring.

On November 27, Confirmation Youth went on a field trip to Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, for Mass on the First Sunday of Advent Mass at 5:00 pm. Four confirmands attended. Joining us on that trip were Joan Daab, Debbie Notter and Charles, Julia and Isaac James. After worship we shared a meal and conversation at Pi pizzeria.

Our next scheduled trip is to the St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum, on January 28. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for Seniors and Veterans, \$6 for students up to age 17. The first van is filled up. After we fill both, we will carpool. Please let us know by January 14 if you plan to join us.



YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

PASTOR JULIE KIES



Friends, The Christmas Parade was a success!. Lucy Schlemmer and Drew Curry rode on the float as Mary and Joseph and Landon Schlemmer, Molly and Emily Harres, Gwen & Elizabeth Boyer, Eloise and Margaret Wolfe, Wes and Ren Clayton took part as angels. Before we began, there was a great migration overhead and Diane Hanna, Pastor Julie and Ren Clayton received our parade blessing from on high.. Our float received the "Best Reason for the Season" award.

Hello Senior Youth!

We are collecting Prayer Room items based on conversations with Paige and Karly and the design ideas from the Pinterest page you all had created. We are a couple of pallets toward our lounge goal and Jody Johnson has cut pieces for the big "barn-quilt" cross. The pieces will need some painting by you and then be affixed to a back board before we place it on the wall. Wendy's crew will be able to help us construct the prayer wall, also.

Let's talk more about design and placement and colors on January 2nd when we go bowling. Then we can set a hang-out-and-create-day for painting and pizza or other fun snacks.



Fun in the New Year!

January 2nd is an ALL-YOUTH Bowling event. Join us at West Park Bowl at 3:00 pm for some fun, recreational good times. We will bowl a couple of games, make some plans for the new year and nosh some bowling alley grub.

Greetings all you enthusiastic adults!

We are Pivot!-ing our plan for the June work trip to the Back Bay Mission. Many of our youth will be returning from a CHS's quadrennial Band and Choir trip to Disney World as the "bus" departs for Biloxi this summer (June 11, 2023). This trip is now counting on you! This is a vital ministry in the Mississippi Delta that provides shelter, basic needs, and job resources for people experiencing crisis and homelessness. There are many ways to help. Volunteers must be 14 years or older. To learn more, sign up on the clip-board in the welcome center or contact Pastor Julie, Denise Johnson or Kathleen Habermehl.



Director of Christian Ed *Denise Johnson*

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

As the Good News of Jesus spread around the world, diverse cultures adapted their own customs and folkways to create unique celebrations of Jesus's birth. Our Sunday School Christmas program was Christmas Around the World, on Sunday, December 18, at our 9:30 a.m. service. Our Promised King Is Born because God keeps his promises. Jesus came for the whole world. His love is for everyone. The children/youth told the story of Jesus' birth through songs and scriptures. We are all called to Spread a Little Love. We celebrated after the service with cookies from around the world.



PAJAMA'S, PANCAKES AND PRAISE

*"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14*

Jesus came to be the light of the world. Music and light are used in different traditions around the world when they celebrate Christmas. Through food, song, and candles, we will remember the Christmas story. Sunday, January 1, there will be Sunday School. All children and youth can wear their pajamas to church and enjoy a pancakes breakfast, and praise God for the birth of Jesus.



PARENT NIGHT OUT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2023
6:00 P.M. TO 10:00 P.M.

Kids will join us for a winter themed evening of fun, games, and a short lesson on how snowflakes remind us that we are God's masterpieces (Ephesians 2:10)

Watch for our email when we are ready to register online.





Camp DuBois

Since 1965 Camp DuBois has welcomed campers to three hundred wooded acres, two lakes, meadows, and wooded trails. Third and fourth generations of campers are coming to enjoy the beauty of Camp DuBois and reconnect with friends and make new, while they continue their faith journey with God. To help create a slide show of this special space and to promote Camp DuBois summer program, please send us your favorite pictures of Camp DuBois. Please send pictures to office@stpaulcolumbia.org

Care Connection

BITS

What the Tech???

Living in a Digital Age

by Joanne Counce

As the New Year approaches, resolutions may be made in bettering yourself! Technology has become both positive and negative in our way of living. A study has shown that Americans will spend \$142 billion on new tech products at Christmas. An average of nearly 4 hours a day is used on digital devices. Smart phones are checked 58 times a day.

On the positive side, St. Paul UCC was able to continue to spread the Word of God during the Pandemic. (It did take some trial and error—but was learned)! On the negative, it can also lead to addictive and socially isolating behavior.

Much more could be said in all of this, but for starts, discuss it with your family this New Year Season. Ask if any changes need to be made to have a healthful, valuable and faith-filled family living.



June 19 -23
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MISSION AND STEWARDSHIP

By Debbie Notter

As we start a New Year, we will be sponsoring a New Child from India. Vignesh, the child we sponsored for the past years, has aged out of the program. Therefore, we are in the process of obtaining a new child to sponsor from Global Ministries. This child will be from the Family Village Farm in Vellore, India.

Children there are provided food, clothing, shelter, love, discipline and training. In a home-like setting, the children find their identity, dignity, and self-worth. Sponsorship costs \$35 a month. We would like to invite you to sponsor our new child for a month.

There is a board in the Welcome Center where you can sign up for the month of your choice. Also on this board are envelopes for each month. After signing up for a month, please take the corresponding envelope to place your money in for that month and return it to the church office. If paying by check, make payable to St. Paul UCC. As soon as we are informed of the identity of our new child, we will pass this information along to the congregation.

Happy New Year and New Child!

BOARD OF EVANGELISM

By Diane Hanna

Our float won “Best Reason for the Season” in the Bright Lights Parade on December 3! The Board would like to thank all those who worked on the float, rode on the float or walked the parade route handing out goodies,

We would also like to thank those who brought a Christmas card for the Welcome Center to share with our church family. We look forward to welcoming our new board members next year, increasing the size of our board which will enable us to try some new programs in addition to our current responsibilities.

Keep watching the Pathfinder to see what will be happening in the new year!

SOLAR PANEL UPDATE

By Dennis Hoguet

St. Paul UCC had installed a solar panel system in January 2021. Production of our solar started January 20, 2021. This article, the first in a series, will help the congregation better understand our solar power system. I, like many had questions about the solar system installed at our church. Questions such as, how much solar energy does it produce? What energy savings do we achieve? What are all the benefits of a solar system? How is all of this tracked? Many other questions come to mind, I will attempt to answer some of these important questions in this and future articles.

Solar Edge is the monitoring platform, website, and app the church can access. It makes use of single log-in which tracks production on an interactive dashboard. Solar energy, similar to electricity is factored using Kilowatt hours(kWh) and Megawatt hours (MWh). 1,000 Kilowatts = 1 Megawatt. January 20, 2021 – December 1, 2022 the solar panel system has produced 97.73 MWh (97,730 kWh). For more information, there is a chart available for print in the office.



WE ARE **HIRING**

LITTLE FRIENDS PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR



QUALIFICATIONS

MUST MEET THE REQUIREMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES INCLUDING:

- 60 SEMESTER HOURS FROM ACCREDITED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- 18 OF THOSE HOURS MUST BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO CHILD CARE AND/OR CHILD DEVELOPMENT FROM BIRTH TO AGE 6
- 2 YEARS EXPERIENCE WORKING IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING
- MUST BE 21 YEARS OLD

FOR A FULL JOB DESCRIPTION PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#) OR CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

IF INTERESTED PLEASE SEND
YOUR RESUME TO

jobs@stpaulcolumbia.org

january

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

<p>1 9:30 Worship and Communion 9:30 Pajamas, Pancakes and Praise Party 10:30 Social Time</p>	<p>2 Office Closed</p>	<p>3 9am Preschool 6:45pm Boy Scout Troup 357</p>	<p>4 9am Preschool 10am Bells 3pm Kids Crew 6pm Confirmation 6pm Jr Girl Scouts 6pm Bells 7pm Stewardship 7pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>5 9am Preschool 6pm Personnel Committee 7pm Search Committee 7 pm Executive Committee</p>	<p>6 8am Quilters</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time</p>	<p>9 11am Staff Meeting 6pm Band Practice 6:15 pm Finance Committee 7pm Boy Scout Cyber Program 7pm Consistory</p>	<p>10 9am Preschool 6:45pm Boy Scout Troup 357 7pm 4H</p>	<p>11 9am Preschool 10:00am Bells 3pm Kids Crew 6pm Confirmation 6pm Bells 7pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>12 9am Preschool 7pm Search Committee 7pm Evangelism Board 7 pm Cemetery Board</p>	<p>13 8am Quilters</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Pathfinder Articles Due 9:30 Worship -Body of Christ 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time</p>	<p>16 11 am Staff Meeting 6pm Band Practice 7:30pm Worship Board</p>	<p>17 9am Preschool 6:45pm Boy Scout Troup 357</p>	<p>18 9am Preschool 10am Bells 3pm Kids Crew 6pm Confirmation 6pm Bells 7pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>19 9am Preschool 7pm Search Committee</p>	<p>20 8am Quilters</p>	<p>21 10am Holocaust Museum Trip</p>
<p>22 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time</p>	<p>23 11am Staff Meeting 6pm Band Practice 7pm Book Club</p>	<p>24 9am Preschool 6:45pm Boy Scout Troup 357 7pm Christian Ed Board</p>	<p>25 9am Preschool 10am Bells 3pm Kids Crew 6pm Bells 7pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>26 9am Preschool 7pm Search Committee</p>	<p>27 8am Quilters</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 9:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Social Time</p>	<p>30 11 am Staff Meeting 6pm Band Practice</p>	<p>31 9am Preschool 6:45pm Boy Scout Troup 357</p>				



Wilderness

ANDREW KING
(MATTHEW 4: 1-11)

How few of us know wilderness, here in these towns, sprawling cities, the gray of their streets, green shrunk down to dots of lawn, patches of park, the remnant trees silent in their memories of an earth mourning its lost forests as Rachel would mourn for her children.

Perhaps this is wilderness: this loss of wild nature, its replacement by concrete and asphalt and steel, its thinning rivers, its sickened oceans, its creatures dwindling like the leaves of a disease-stricken tree.

Perhaps this wilderness is where the Christ must come today: into this new human solitude, this place slowly being emptied of all life not our own, this place where even God becomes harder to find, our relationship to the divine put under hard pressure, our temptation to be ourselves the only god we will serve, tempted to pretend we are invulnerable.

O Holy One, come into this, our self-made wilderness. Come be with us in the loneliness of our cell phones and computers, come be with us in our hunger for the meaning of our life, come into the wasteland we are making of the earth, this kingdom of our arrogance where we so often forget the life-giving love of God.

O Holy One, help us here, before this wilderness becomes one we do not know how to leave.

Our Members in Senior Living

Our Members in Nursing Homes

Garden Place Of Columbia
Clarice Giffhorn Rm. 204
Ed Schutte Rm. Rm. 113
Grace Volkert Rm. 110

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

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

	November		Year to Date	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Revenue				
Tithes & Offerings:				
Pledged & NonPledged	31,506.96	26,731.00	317,103.87	332,723.35
Misc. Contributions	1,500.00	869.75	6,034.90	6,567.75
Interest Income	0.00	24.52	3,988.84	3,923.68
Endowment Interest Income	0.00	0.00	52,617.51	55,004.19
Rental Income	500.00	600.00	1,700.00	900.00
Misc Income	2,388.93	2,452.94	18,312.33	28,859.76
Total Revenues	35,895.89	30,678.21	399,757.45	427,978.73
Expenses				
Personnel	25,106.52	26,727.25	272,397.41	310,116.17
General Expenses	5,306.50	4,649.51	92,837.03	119,810.37
* OCWM	<u>3,682.48</u>	<u>3,870.07</u>	<u>22,778.00</u>	<u>24,885.97</u>
Total Expenses	34,095.50	35,246.83	388,012.44	454,812.51
Net Receipts	1,800.39	(4,568.62)	11,745.01	(26,833.78)
RESERVES			125,664.49	95,556.85
*OCWM 10,000.00 out of St Paul Mission (833.33 monthly)				
Solar Loan Balance	48,969.81			

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:

Intentional Interim Senior Pastor

Rev. Sheldon Culver- srpastor@stpaulcolumbia.org

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 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