



Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S CONNECTION

April 2026



Scan for Website

Visit us on our Website at www.stpaulucelgin.org and Facebook at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Elgin, IL

Browse our Church Calendar on our website to keep up to date on our various events. You can find the calendar on our website at www.stpaulucelgin.org and click on the calendar link



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What's in this Issue:

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- Staff Spotlight
- Ministry News
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- Christian Education
- A Note and a Poem
- UCC Camps
- Financially Speaking
- April Birthdays

Mark Your Calendar:

- Thursday, April 2 Maundy Thursday Service
- Friday, April 3 Good Friday Service
- Sunday, April 5 Easter Sunday
- Sunday, April 5 Easter Egg Hunt

Church: 40W720 Plank Rd., Elgin, IL 60124

Office: 12N268 Switzer Rd., Elgin, IL 60124

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Phone #: 847-628-6118 / **Email:** stpauls4me@yahoo.com / **Website:** stpaulucelgin.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Rev. Liz Patz, Pastor

Sherry Severing, Administrative Assistant

Jon Kobel, Choir Director

Ron Zemke, Pianist

from the
PASTOR 

As we prepare for Easter, for God's liberating love to open doors in our lives, take a moment and think again about how we started this Lenten journey. At the Ash Wednesday service we received a simple paper door hanger. We wrote two things on the paper. First, we remembered gratitude and wrote our answers to the questions, What doors are wide open right now in your life? Who are the people and situations that are life-giving?

Next, we asked for God to meet us at the doors of our struggle. We named doors that felt slammed shut and painful. We considered, Where is it possible to open them again? Conversely, we named doors that needed to close for us to be healthy and whole again. We named the doors we wanted God to help us walk through: "O God, meet me here and help me *heal, grow, say goodbye, believe, forgive, and more...*

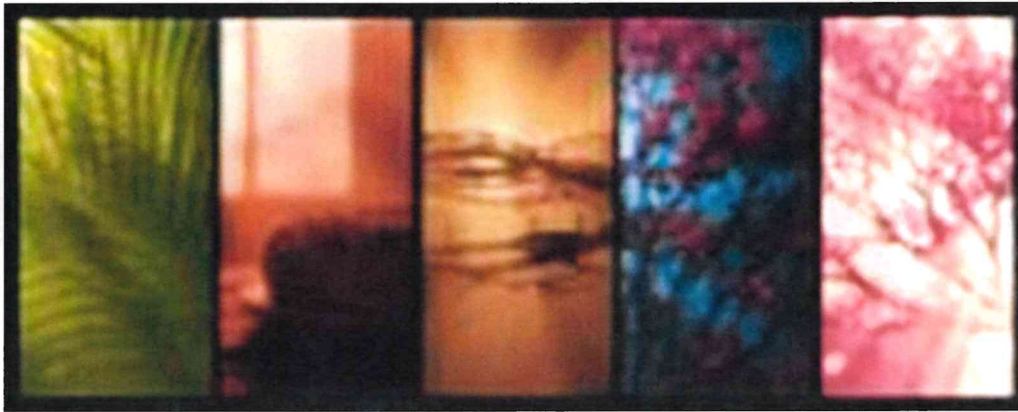
As we stand at the door of Holy Week, I encourage you to revisit these two practices: remember gratitude and open up to grace. Spend some time in quiet reflection to name to God who and what you are thankful for. Pray, "God, thank for the doors of life you have opened to me." Then, name to God the doorways that you fear or avoid - maybe a particular conversation or decision, the doorways you feel excluded from entering, or the doorways that have been closed against your will. Pray, "God, meet me here and help me..." (fill in with what your heart needs to be well).

Trust that God's seeks to open every door that leads to life. Open your heart and trust that God sees you and loves you completely. Trust that when you knock, God opens the door and love greets you, forgiveness greets you, grace has already set the table for you. Every time.

I look forward to standing at the door with you this Holy Week. I look forward to remembering at the table and at the cross. And I look forward to celebrating the Good News on Easter Sunday, that God's love opens every door and no one and nothing can close it.

Peace,
Pastor Liz

HOLY WEEK SERVICES



Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Come to gather around the table together and remember and share the sacrament of communion.

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 3 at 2 p.m.

This solemn service ends as we approach the 3 p.m. hour, the hour of Jesus death as recorded in the gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We will read the story of Jesus passion from the Gospel of Mark, and reflect with song, art, and prayer.

Easter Sunday, April 5

Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m.

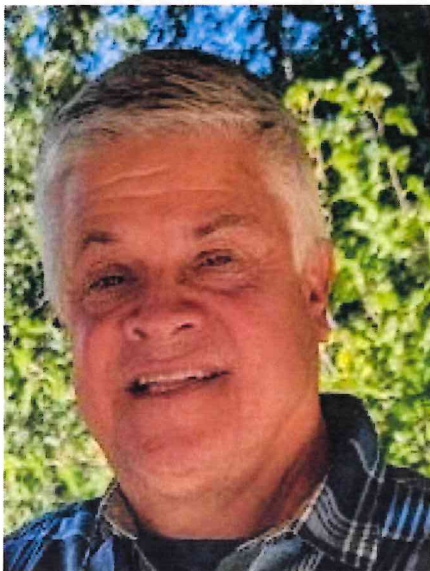
Breakfast at 8:00 a.m.

Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt at 10:30 a.m.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Our Pianist, Ron Zemke



Ron got his start in church music at the age of 14, thanks to his piano teacher who was also the church organist and pastor's wife. Many piano (and voice, organ, and guitar) lessons later, he graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in music education. For the next 35 years, he worked as a K-8 choral-general music teacher, primarily in Schaumburg District 54. Concurrently, he continued to serve in various churches as a pianist, organist, singer, and director. Whether at church, school, home, or in the car, Ron prefers an eclectic mix of musical styles. In addition to music, Ron enjoys exploring God's creation, especially in state and national parks, and documenting those experiences through nature photography. He treasures his time and travels with friends and family, now with the added joy of being a first-time grandpa. Ron and his wife, Dawn,

first visited St. Paul's in April 2023, and joined as members a year later. They're very thankful that God led them to this congregation!



MINISTRY NEWS



We are a ***NEW*** CWS Kit Drop-Off Site

St. Paul's is proud to be a temporary CWS kit drop-off location for the Fox Valley area starting April 1st. Church World Service (CWS) is the organization that hosts the CROP Hunger Walk, provides disaster relief services, and provides food and water access nationally and internationally. A section of our Mission House garage was cleared and prepared with level flooring to store stacked Clean-up Buckets, as well as Hygiene Kits, Period Packs, and Kids Kits. CWS will pick-up quarterly and move kits to the Mid-Atlantic Super Depot in Mechanicsburg, PA. Barb Kamp from Missions will oversee the drop-off scheduling.

Diaper Ministry



First Sunday Diaper Collection

Our next diaper collection is Sunday, April 5th and we will be collecting size 4 & 6 diapers. Your commitment supporting families experiencing diaper insecurity is truly amazing.

Help Distribute at a Playgroup

We will continue to bring diapers to the community playgroups twice a month through May. Diapers are ready for you to take on Sunday or pick-up from the church office. It's a super simple volunteer opportunity - pick-up diapers, go to the location, set out the sign, and distribute a pack of diapers to moms that ask for one. Sometimes no one at the play group needs diapers - and that's ok!

Thank you for representing St. Paul's and helping families keep their little ones dry, healthy, and happy.

Sign-up sheets are on the hall bulletin board.
Please consider helping at the following events:

Zion Lutheran Church (330 Griswold, Elgin)
Monday, April 6th 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
p.m.

Izaak Walton (899 Jay St, Elgin)
Wednesday, April 22nd 11:30 a.m.–12:30

This summer we will again partner with EPEL to support families and bring diapers to their summer playgroup locations. More information will be coming soon. Please prayerfully consider being a part of this service in our community.

Food & Diaper Distribution begins in April

The Diaper Ministry will be distributing diapers alongside the Northern Illinois Mobile Food Pantry at the old Sherman Hospital Parking Lot (901 Center St., Elgin), the second Tuesday of each month beginning April 14th from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

We will also need 6 volunteers for distributing food with Northern IL Food Bank, as well. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

Help distribute food or diapers. If it is your first time joining us at old Sherman, please see Karen Smith for a volunteer consent form.

Together, we are "Changing Lives One Diaper at a Time"
Blessings, Karen Smith, Karen Snyder, Barb Kamp

BUTTER BRAID AND COOKIE DOUGH SALE

We will be selling Butter Braids and Cookie Dough from April 12 to April 26th. They make a great addition to your Mother's Day menu.

Grab an order form to share with friends, family, and coworkers. Orders will be available for pick up on Sunday May 2nd before or after the church service. Proceeds for this sale will go towards St. Paul's 150th celebration.

Please see Karen Westerman if you have any questions.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Pancake Breakfast Thank You

Our hearts and stomachs are full!! A special shout-out to the children who hosted a successful pancake breakfast last Sunday. They did an incredible job making the free-will offering signs, setting the tables, helping flip pancakes, taking orders, clearing tables, and serving with such bright smiles. Seeing our youngest members lead the way in hospitality was a bright spot in the morning.

A huge thank you to our master pancake flippers Chuck Rath, Diane Peterson, and Chuck Smith. To Jenn Volkening, Dale Volkening, and Ellen Volkening for their generosity providing the necessary pancake ingredients, sausages, and blueberries. To the Heinrich family for sharing with us their delicious homemade syrup. And, last but not least, thanks to Tammy Rath for her help cleaning up in the kitchen.

We especially thank all of you who attended and supported the pancake breakfast. We collected \$201.00 for PADS because of your generous free-will offerings. A special reminder that when we come together we are able to do great things.

Blessings,

CE Ministry

Karen Smith (Council Representative), Karen Westerman, Ken Volkening, Janet Werner, Ginny Mursewick



Creation Care



Creation Care Sunday

April 26, 2026

Email a photo of creation that makes your heart SING. Your photo will be used in worship. Email the photo to the office by April 19th at stpauls4me@yahoo.com.

Planting Wildflowers

April 26, 2026 after worship

The Creation Care ministry invites you to our first SING event (Spirituality in Nature Group) after worship. Kids and adults are welcome. Weather permitting, we will get outside and get our hands in the dirt with planting native wild flower seeds on the church property. Wear clothes for gardening. Seeds, dirt, and fun will be supplied. Look for details in the weekly news email.

A NOTE AND A POEM

Dear St. Paul's,

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit with you and my St. Paul's UCC Family [on Sunday, March 8th]. As appears to be custom after I visit your church, I wrote a poem [inspired by the Lenten theme At the Door] to process both my 3-year anniversary at PADS and all the doors that have opened in the time since I started.

Grateful to you,
Jen Keller, Development Manager at PADS of Elgin

"Opening Doors" By Jen Keller

At the time
It felt like ultimate betrayal.
A door slamming—
The air knocked from my lungs,
Leaving me crumpled in darkness,
Days dissolving into tears,
Four days under the covers,
inconsolable,
No future I could fathom.
Unable to locate Any door
To take me In any direction.

The truth was
The door had been closing
Slowly, over a long period of time—
It wanted to close.
But I couldn't do it myself.
Someone else made the decision—
Legs knocked out from under me,
Thrust into the unknown.

What would I do?
What could I do?
What should I do?
Completely paralyzed,
Searching deep within myself
For any answer.

Then—
An email.
A call for volunteers.
My heart, wired to help,
Recognized something.
I ventured through the door
With one goal: To help.
The path forward
Still uncertain,
I helped anyway.

The path forward
Still uncertain,
I helped anyway.

Not without struggle.
Not without doubt.
But guided, always,
By the one thing I knew—
To help.

And slowly—
Another door opened.
Then another.
A person met.
An event attended.
A conversation that surprised me.
Each threshold crossed
Leading somewhere
I could not have planned.

Opportunities I never sought.
Richness I couldn't have imagined.
Connections that changed me.
Memories worth keeping.

But most of all—
I never stopped helping.
The door that closed
Could not take that from me.

A gratitude I'm still learning
To fully hold.

What's Happening at the UCC Camps

Check out this Spring's offerings! Pilgrim Park Camp and Retreat Center is only 2 hours away.

Crafter Retreat April 20-23

Kids Sports Camp June 21-27 for completed 6th-9th grades.

Making Memories July 6-8 for grandparents and grandchildren.

Women's Sacred Relax and Renewal October 2-3

Crafter Retreat December 3-6

Visit there website for more information or to register by going to this link:

<https://pilgrimpark.campbrainregistration.com/>



Easter is Hope

“The Easter message that rings loud and clear for us in this moment is hope for today and always. It is possible to triumph over the grave. It is possible to triumph over the empire. It is possible to triumph over the evils of the day. It is possible to experience God present amid the pain and suffering. It is possible for life to triumph over death. And it is possible for love to win over hatred.”

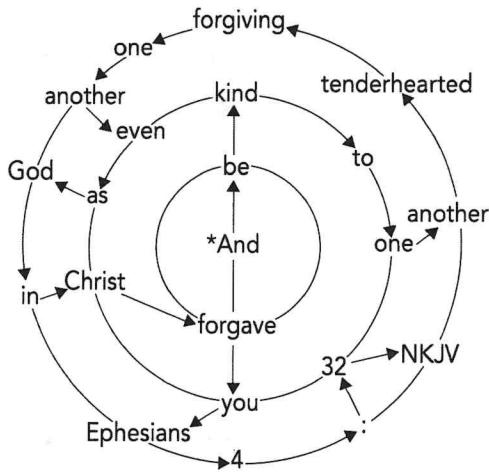
-Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson
General Minister and President/CEO, UCC

Puzzle!

This Bible verse teaches an important lesson about how we should treat others — and why.



Start with the asterisk in the center circle and follow the arrows. Write the words in order on the blanks below.



*And _____

Answer: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32, NKJV



FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection helps us live with gratitude every day.

Use the picture and number code to fill in the blanks for Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV

1. Jesus 2. weary 3. endured 4. opposition	5. cross 6. endured 7. scorning 8. shame	1. eyes 2. us 3. joy 4. heart
5. perfecter 6. him 7. faith 8. hand	5. right 6. grow 7. God 8. throne	

"... fixing our _____ on _____, the _____ and _____ of _____ . For the _____ set before _____ he _____ the _____, _____ its _____, and sat down at the _____ of the _____ of _____. Consider _____ who _____ such _____ from _____, so that you will not _____ and _____."

Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV

Answer: "... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV

Bible Quiz

According to Matthew's account, something remarkable happened to the earth on the day Jesus was crucified and again on the morning when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the tomb. What occurred on both days?

A. There was a flood on both days.
 B. There was an earthquake on both days.
 C. There was a huge fire on each day.
 D. There was complete darkness on both days.

Answer: B (Matthew 27:51; Matthew 28:2)

Financially Speaking

The February receipts were \$24,228.45 which includes giving for fixed expenses as well as charitable giving. See below:

	January	Year-to-Date
Offering		
Pledged Offering	\$13,579.00	\$43,188.00
Contributions (Non-Pledged)	\$1,569.45	\$3,869.45
Loose Offering	\$220.00	\$363.00
Denominational Support		
OCWM (Illinois Conference)	\$1,160.00	\$2,135.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$0.00	\$0.00
Neighborhoods in Need	\$0.00	\$0.00
Strengthen the Church	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross	\$0.00	\$0.00
Church Fund Support		
Land, Building and Equipment Fund	\$3,390.00	\$4,465.00
Coffee Hour donations	\$80.00	\$140.00
Misc. General Fund	\$0.00	\$32.00
Scholarship Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00
“J” Dollars	\$250.00	\$367.00
Specific Ministry Support		
Music Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mission Projects	\$0.00	\$0.00
Diaper Ministry (Including May Community Drive)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship and Hospitality	\$0.00	\$0.00
Seasonal Giving		
Easter Breakfast	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lent/Easter Offering	\$226.00	\$226.00
Heritage Fest	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Offering	\$0.00	\$100.00

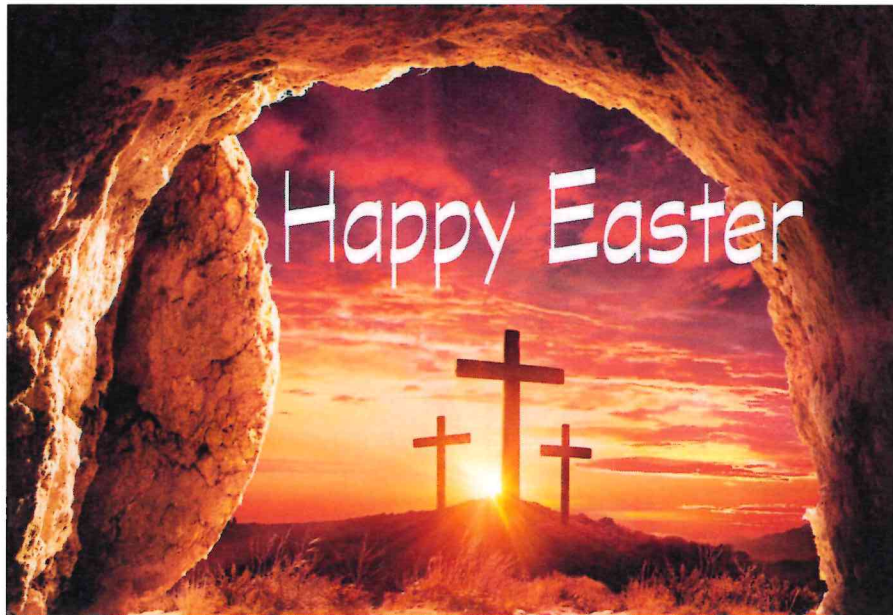
	January	Year-to-Date
Church Project Support		
Constitution Review	\$300.00	\$300.00
Community Support		
Pads 5K Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$0.00
Elgin Pride	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pads Emergency Appeal	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other		
CD Interest	\$0.00	\$0.00
Memorial Giving	\$2,865.00	\$2,865.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Flowers	\$0.00	\$0.00
Easter Memorial Flowers	\$0.00	\$0.00
Initial Offering (Related to Giving Envelope)	\$9.00	\$51.00
150th Celebration Dinner	\$0.00	\$0.00
Donation to CE for VBS	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$1,000 Donation to CE for Confirmation	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Trees	\$0.00	\$0.00
CE Pumpkin Sale	\$0.00	\$0.00
Craft Fair	\$0.00	\$0.00
Living Nativity Free Will Offering	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$24,228.45	\$58,681.45

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this report or on your statements.

Karen Westerman
 Financial Secretary
 847-727-9973



- 4/03 Iris Heinrich
- 4/06 Connie Moraca
- 4/06 James Werner
- 4/10 Mike Mursewick
- 4/18 Linda Schambach
- 4/19 Heather Heinrich
- 4/23 Matalia Termini
- 4/27 Kristi Miller
- 4/28 Carl Ansel
- 4/28 Diane Peterson




****Please forgive any omissions. Please contact the Church Office by email or by phone at 847-628-6118 with corrections.**




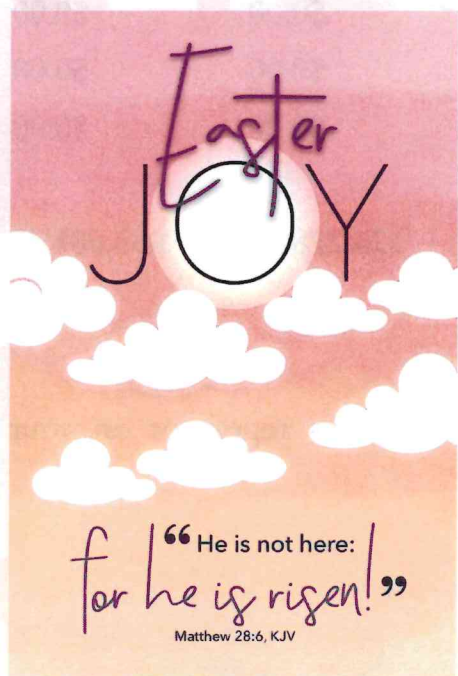
Worship Online

Watch our Services live on YouTube every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. or watch them when you have time. Just scan the QR Code or go to YouTube and search St. Paul's United Church of Christ



Online Giving

Your gifts to the church provide for our ministries and programs. To make an online donation scan the QR Code or go to our website at www.stpaulucelgin.org and click on the give link.

May Newsletter Deadline:
April 19th

If you have an article you would like included in the next Newsletter, please submit it to the office by emailing stpauls4me@yahoo.com no later than the deadline!

