

# the CONNECTION

July 2026



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Website

Visit us on our Website at [www.stpauluccelgin.org](http://www.stpauluccelgin.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.stpauluccelgin.org](http://www.stpauluccelgin.org) and click on the  
calendar link



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## What's in this Issue:

- From the Pastor
- Summer Book Club
- Church Picnic
- Community Concert
- Diaper Ministry
- Christian Education
- UCC Camps
- July Worship Schedules
- Financially Speaking
- July Birthdays and Anniversaries



**St. Paul's**  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
Elgin, Illinois

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

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

**Mailing:** P.O. Box 5598, Elgin, IL 60121

**Phone #:** 847-628-6118 / **Email:** [stpauls4me@yahoo.com](mailto:stpauls4me@yahoo.com) / **Website:** [stpauluccelgin.org](http://stpauluccelgin.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



## How does our garden grow?

In the Parable of the Sower, we watch a gardener plant LOTS of seeds. In the end, the gardener finds that one location grows a bumper crop. Planting is important gardening work. The planning and effort are required, but the purpose of the garden is a good harvest! So how do we wisely choose where to focus our efforts so that God is glorified and things like wellness, peace, and justice grow?

At June's council meeting we started "discerning conversations", gauging the current "harvest" or impact of our ministry and activity efforts. How does our garden grow? This work is not meant to grade us or shame us. Rather, we want to look with fresh eyes at what we do (and don't yet do). What is the impact of our effort? How can St. Paul's best make a difference where we are planted?

To help us assess, we rated the fruitfulness of the "Be the Church" statements at St. Paul's in the last five years.

1 = Minimal focus, little impact. No one can tell if that seed is planted in our garden.

5 = Lots of focus and recognizable impact on our community, on our congregation, and on us individually.

For example, "Members have given generously of their time, talents, and finances to the mission and vision of the church." (Share earthly and spiritual resources)

How would you rate the fruitfulness of this statement at St. Paul's? See the breakout group's rating below. We want your ratings and ideas too! Please take time to rate the statements in the upcoming weekly emails. During July you will also find "Be the Church" statements at the coffee hour tables to discuss and rate together.

Thanks you for joining in this good work!

Peace,

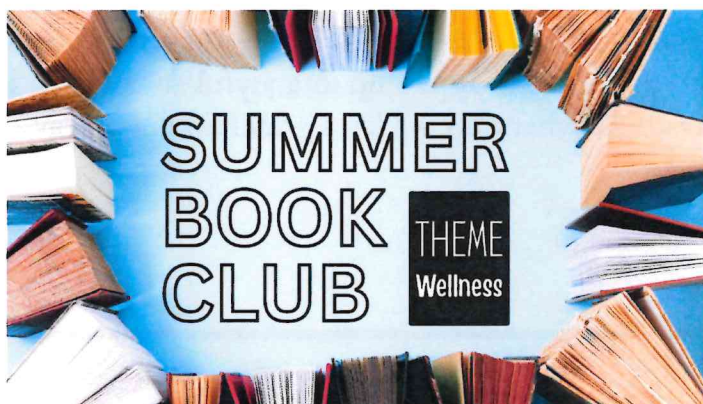
Pastor Liz

**"Members have given generously of their time, talents, and finances to the mission and vision of the church."**

Rating 5

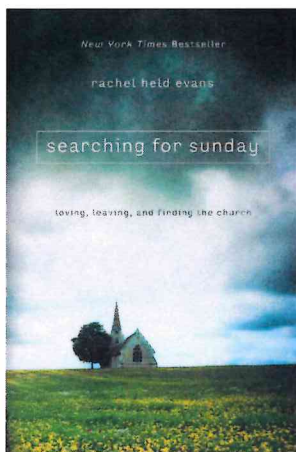
The group tasked with rating this statement explained that in the last five years giving has been very generous citing faithful pledges and offering and special collections and donations, Land Build and Equipment fund support, time and presence with PADS, Diaper Ministry, serving on Sunday morning, visiting and cards.

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Wellness is the summer theme: wellness of body, mind, spirit. See the book display and sign-ups at church. Book Club will meet for discussion the last Thursday of the month or a date and time chosen by those who sign-up.

## JULY



### **Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church**

by Rachel Held Evans

"If you need a book to pastor you, befriend you, pick you up and dust you off, and maybe even give you a spiritual kiss on the cheek and a devotional kick in the pants, you've found it here."

- Brian McLaren, author and speaker

*A Goodreads Choice Award 2015: Nominee for Readers' Favorite Memoir & Autobiography:*

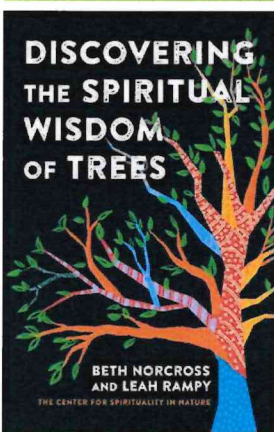
"Like millions of her millennial peers, Rachel Held Evans didn't want to go to church anymore.

The hypocrisy, the politics, the gargantuan building budgets, the scandals--church culture seemed so far removed from Jesus. Yet, despite her cynicism and misgivings, something kept drawing her back to Church. And so she set out on a journey to understand Church and to find her place in it.

Centered around seven sacraments, Evans' quest takes readers through a liturgical year with stories about baptism, communion, confirmation, confession, marriage, vocation, and death that are funny, heartbreaking, and sharply honest.

A memoir about making do and taking risks, about the messiness of community and the power of grace, *Searching for Sunday* is about overcoming cynicism to find hope and, somewhere in between, Church.

## AUGUST



### Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees

by Beth Norcross and Leah Rampy

"This book encourages us into a more intentional balance of head and heart, being and doing, all wrapped up in a joyful celebration of the sacred presence - always available whenever we lay a grateful hand upon a sturdy trunk..."

-Carrie Newcomer, singer/songwriter



## Church Picnic Sunday, July 19

Our 150th celebration continues on Sunday, July 19th with a special worship service led by guest preacher and musician Christopher Grundy followed by a church picnic! All are invited to a BBQ picnic catered by BBQ on Wheels sponsored by the 150th Anniversary fund. Games and prizes for all ages are planned. Please RSVP at church or to the office # of Adults and # of kids under 10 by July 5th.

### The Menu

Boneless Chicken Breast  
Beef Brisket  
Pulled Pork Shoulder  
Hot Dog option for kids

Mac and Cheese  
Creamy Cucumber Salad  
Pasta Salad  
BBQ Baked Beans



**Saturday, July 18**  
**5:00 p.m.**

St. Paul's  
United Church of Christ  
40W720 Plank Road  
(corner of Plank & Switzer)  
Elgin, IL 60124

This is a FREE event.  
Diaper donations sizes 1-6 to support  
our diaper ministry are welcome!

**COME SING WITH US!**

Join us for an hour of  
songs of faith, love, and justice  
featuring songwriter

**CHRISTOPHER GRUNDY**

## **Community Concert** **Saturday, July 18**

In celebration of our 150th anniversary, we are hosting a free community concert and meal on Saturday, July 18 at 5 p.m. featuring guest singer/songwriter Christopher Grundy. The event is titled "I Will Sing of Your Love" and Christopher will lead us in learning and singing songs of faith, love, and justice. We sing Christopher's songs in worship, including "Come to Me", "Gloria", and "Home by Another Way". His song "Heaven and Earth Are Filled" has become a beloved hymn at the All Saints Service of Remembrance. This summer we're learning new songs like this cheerful earworm, "Fruits of the Spirit". Christopher is ordained in the United Church of Christ and serves as Professor of Worship and Preaching and Associate Dean for the Chapel at Eden Theological Seminary. Learn more about Christopher and his music [here](#).

This is a free all-ages event but guests are welcome to donate diapers sizes 1-6 to support St. Paul's Diaper Ministry. The community meal will be hot dogs, bagged chips, bottled water, and popsicles. The event is sponsored by the 150th celebration fund.

Mark your calendar, invite your family and friends, share the [event on Facebook](#) - or share this [link to our website event page](#) by email or text. Please consider signing-up to greet and serve at this special event. See sign-up at church and in the Weekly News email. Thank you Sam Hebert for designing our event poster and postcards!



## MINISTRY NEWS

### Diaper Ministry

Thank you for your generosity and support of the Diaper Ministry. We have been busy distributing diapers at the Northern Illinois Mobile Pantries and the EPEL (Enriching Partnerships for Early Learning) Learning on the Go Camps.

A massive thank you to everyone who has generously contributed diapers to our monthly collection. Because of your incredible faithfulness, we have been able to bless so many local families.

**We are taking a break from our first Sunday of the month diaper collections for July and August. We will kick off our monthly collections back up in September.**

Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

*Together, we are “Changing” Lives One Diaper at a Time!*

Diaper Ministry Chairpersons,  
Karen Smith, Karen Snyder & Barb Kamp

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## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Pumpkins Planted

The children had fun planting pumpkins in their garden. We can't wait to watch them sprout and grow over the coming months. Stay tuned for updates on our pumpkins.

### *Wild Wonder Summer Sunday School*

Starting June 28th, the children will have Time with Children during worship to learn about the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The children will then head outside onto our church property to be a part of God's “Wild Wonders” in creation. They will see how caring for creation is one way to practice the Fruits of the Spirit like love, kindness, and faithfulness.

Please dress your children in clothes that can handle a little dirt, grass stains, or a splash of water. Sneakers or closed-toe shoes are highly recommended and don't forget to apply bug spray and sunscreen prior to going outside.

We are looking for volunteers to help lead a lesson on any given Sunday. Please contact Karen Smith if you are interested at [ks2teach@gmail.com](mailto:ks2teach@gmail.com).

## Birdhouse Build

On Father's Day June 21st, our church grounds came alive with teamwork and fellowship. The morning was filled with the joyful sounds of excitement and hammering as families built birdhouses together. Our children were right in the center of the action—handing over nails, hammering wooden panels, and gluing pieces together with pride.

A special thank you to Chuck Smith for making it all happen by putting together the perfect birdhouse design and getting all the materials ready for us!

The families chose a special place to hang their birdhouses and they now beautifully adorn our church property. Come take a walk to see them.

Christian Education Ministry

Karen Smith (Chairperson), Karen Westerman, Ken Volkening, Kylie Smith, Janet Werner & Ginny Mursewick





## Remember the Kindness Tree

We are participating in the national [250 Acts of Kindness in 2026](#), celebrating our country's 250th birthday by building a culture of compassion, connection, and unity across the nation. Our Kindness Tree is a fun sharing project and also a spiritual practice. When we write our kind acts on a leaf and display it on the tree, we remember Jesus' commandment to love one another. Also, writing the kindnesses shown to us is remembering gratitude. Your leaf is a prayer of thanks. Make it a practice to add one kindness leaf every Sunday. Or [email the office](#) with your kindness and we'll make a leaf for you!

## What's Happening at the UCC Camps

Check out what's happening at Pilgrim Park Camp and Retreat Center! It's only about 2 hours away.

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 their website for more information or to register by going to this link:  
<https://pilgrimpark.campbrainregistration.com/>



Check out what's happening at Tower Hill Camp and Retreat Center. It's only about 2 hours away!

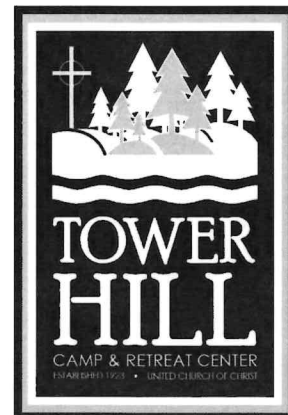
HUG Camp July 5-10 for completed 4th-11th grades

HUG Tenderfoot July 8-10 for K-3rd grades

Godstock July 19-24 for 3rd-9th grades

Godstock Tenderfoot July 22-24 for K-3rd grade

Creation Care Camp August 3-6 Intergenerational



Visit their website for more information or to register by going to this link:  
<https://www.towerhillcamp.org/youth-camps>

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## Worship Servers for the Month of July

### **Greeters:**

July 5 - Connie Moraca & Vernon Knaak

July 12 - Chuck & Karen Smith

July 19 - Kandy Jones & Elsie Ward

July 26 - Bill & Karen Snyder

### **Ushers:**

July 5 - Dave & Pat Thompson, Craig Whyte, and Dale Volkening

July 12 - Dan Heinrich, Vernon Knaak, Connie Moraca, & Mike Westerman

July 19 - Chuck Smith, Ryan Smith, and Rick & Sara Tustin

July 26 - Lee & Nicole Thielke and Dexter & Ashely Young

### **Scripture Readers:**

July 5 - Jim Werner

July 12 - Anne Heinrich

July 19 - Bill Snyder

July 26 - Ken Volkening

### **Counters:**

July 5 - Fred Vollman

July 12 - Sandy Volkening

July 19 - Linda Meglin

July 26 - Karen Vollman

### **Media:**

July 5 - TBD

July 12 - TBD

July 19 - TBD

July 26 - TBD

### **Communion:**

Sue and Lorrel Petty

Thank you to our dedicated worship service volunteers each Sunday morning. Your time, commitment, and willingness to serve help make our worship services possible, and we are truly grateful for all you do.

If you are interested in volunteering in one or more areas on Sunday mornings, we would love to have you join us! Please contact the church office for more information or talk to Pastor Liz.

# Financially Speaking

The May receipts were \$28,680.31 which includes giving for fixed expenses as well as charitable giving. See below:

|                                                 | January     | Year-to-Date |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Offering</b>                                 |             |              |
| Pledged Offering                                | \$17,285.00 | \$88,130.00  |
| Contributions (Non-Pledged)                     | \$1,930.00  | \$9,172.80   |
| Loose Offering                                  | \$427.00    | \$1,489.18   |
| <b>Denominational Support</b>                   |             |              |
| OCWM (Illinois Conference)                      | \$1,002.580 | \$4,033.50   |
| One Great Hour of Sharing                       | \$0.00      | \$405.00     |
| Neighborhoods in Need                           | \$0.00      | \$0.00       |
| Strengthen the Church                           | \$145.00    | \$170.00     |
| <b>Church Fund Support</b>                      |             |              |
| Land, Building and Equipment Fund               | \$2,082.50  | \$7,352.50   |
| Coffee Hour donations                           | \$165.00    | \$409.00     |
| Misc. General Fund                              | \$0.00      | \$82.00      |
| Scholarship Fund                                | \$0.00      | \$750.00     |
| "J" Dollars                                     | \$35.00     | \$545.00     |
| <b>Specific Ministry Support</b>                |             |              |
| Music Fund                                      | \$0.00      | \$90.00      |
| Mission Projects                                | \$0.00      | \$0.00       |
| Diaper Ministry (Including May Community Drive) | \$0.00      | \$550.00     |
| Fellowship and Hospitality                      | \$0.00      | \$0.00       |
| Creation Care Grant                             | \$0.00      | \$500.00     |
| <b>Seasonal Giving</b>                          |             |              |
| Easter Breakfast                                | \$0.00      | \$545.00     |
| Lent/Easter Offering                            | \$0.00      | \$2,125.00   |
| Heritage Fest                                   | \$0.00      | \$0.00       |
| Christmas Offering                              | \$0.00      | \$100.00     |

### Church Project Support

|                     |        |            |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Constitution Review | \$0.00 | \$300.00   |
| Nursery Makeover    | \$0.00 | \$50.00    |
| New Chairs          | \$0.00 | \$2,344.51 |

### 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                                           | \$5,013.31 | \$6,334.83  |
| CD (transferring to higher rate CD)                   | \$0.00     | \$30,000.00 |
| Memorial Giving                                       | \$0.00     | \$2,865.00  |
| Miscellaneous                                         | \$0.00     | \$0.00      |
| Christmas Flowers                                     | \$0.00     | \$0.00      |
| Easter Memorial Flowers                               | \$0.00     | \$474.00    |
| Initial Offering (Related to Giving Envelope)         | \$0.00     | \$51.00     |
| 150th Celebration Dinner/Butter Braid Sale & Donation | \$622.00   | \$1,812.33  |
| 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 Pancake Breakfast                                  | \$0.00     | \$201.00    |
| Craft Fair                                            | \$0.00     | \$0.00      |
| Living Nativity Free Will Offering                    | \$0.00     | \$0.00      |
| In and Out                                            | \$6.00     | \$6.00      |

|               |                    |                     |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>\$28,680.31</b> | <b>\$160,780.32</b> |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this report.

Karen Westerman  
Financial Secretary  
847-727-9973



7/02 William Snyder  
 7/06 Emily Streit  
 7/07 Ainsley Bryson  
 7/07 Evelyn Bryson  
 7/07 Winifred Heinrich  
 7/10 Maya Garner  
 7/11 Christina Kamp  
 7/14 Anne Heinrich  
 7/15 Patrick Kelly  
 7/18 Tommy Patz  
 7/20 Sara Tustin  
 7/21 Jay Shircliff  
 7/24 Melanie Werner  
 7/26 Margene Absolon  
 7/27 Langston Kelly

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



7/04 Herman & Judy Volkening  
 7/17 Chet & Sarah Westerman  
 7/18 Dan & Robert Wayeshe  
 7/21 Ryan & Kylie Smith



### Mark Your Calendar:

- Saturday, July 18 - Christopher G. Concert
- Sunday, July 19 - 150th Picnic
- Thursday, July 24 - Summer Book Club
- Sunday, August 9 - Blessing of the Backpacks

### 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.stpauluccelgin.org](http://www.stpauluccelgin.org) and click on the give link.



### August Newsletter Deadline: July 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](mailto:stpauls4me@yahoo.com) no later than the deadline!

