

the

CONNECTION

September 2026



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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 under the "about us" tab.



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Elgin, Illinois

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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



Advent Devotional written by...YOU!

Calling all Writers, Typers, and Users of speech-to-text! All Artists! **All Ages!** This Advent we are creating our own devotional book at St. Paul's!

This project is inspired by the fruitfulness work we undertook this summer. The last "Be the Church" statement on the banner hanging in the sanctuary reads "Enjoy this life." It is grounded in Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." To "rejoice in the Lord" is to feel and express great joy or gratitude for God's presence in our lives. When people share the presence and movement of God in their lives, we grow closer to God and to one another.

Each of us feel grateful for God's presence and movement in lots of ways. Admittedly, *expressing* our gratefulness or sharing personal faith testimonies is not a common practice in St. Paul's tradition. But that doesn't mean it doesn't happen! The sharing that happens in small group settings like bible study and Zoom prayer or during sharing of joys and concerns in worship is always a blessing to everyone gathered. What if we shared our testimony in writing and art? Janet Werner reminded the council that St. Paul's published church devotionals many years ago and I am inspired to give it a try.

Those interested in contributing to our Advent devotional are invited to **optional** writers workshops on **Thursday, September 24th from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. on Zoom** and **in-person on Saturday, September 26th from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.** We will read through the Advent scriptures together, share insights and inspiration, share writing tips, and choose the focus scripture passage to write our devotional. Around 300 words is a good length for this devotional project. Writing more is your choice! We can also meet one-on-one if you prefer.

Please prayerfully consider joining our 2026 Advent devotional team! You'll be surprised how fast you reach 300 words. You will receive encouragement and as much writing support as you choose. I know our devotionals will honor God, shine Christ's light, and bless one another this Advent season. Questions? Let's talk. pastorliz24@gmail.com

Peace,
Pastor Liz



MINISTRY NEWS

Diaper Ministry

3,722

diapers at camps

We were a visible presence at EPEL's Learning on the Go Camps this summer. We distributed 3,722 diapers in total at the three parks - Cornerstone, Lords Park, and St. Francis. A huge thank you to our volunteers: Jamie, Duncan, Aidan & Willow Flentge, Pastor Liz, Charley Heinrich, Isaac & Jennifer Volkening, Diana Cruz, Alison Smith, Paula DeFarno, Polly Russell, Kylie, Ryan, Taylor & Elena Smith, Linda Meglin, Sara Tustin, and Karen Vollman.

1,416

diapers at ECC

We distributed 1,416 diapers at ECC Project Backpack on August 1st. Thank you to Sara Tustin, Karen Vollman, Ginny Mursewick, Paula DeFarno, and Polly Russell for their help. And, thank you to Anne Heinrich for loading her car and bringing all the diapers to the event.

696

diapers at Old Sherman

On Tuesday, August 11th, we distributed 696 diapers at the old Sherman Hospital parking lot in conjunction with Northern Illinois Mobile Food Pantry.

1,2,4,5,6

sizes needed

We will start collecting diapers again the first Sunday of each month beginning in September - September 6th will be the first collection date. We are in great need of sizes 1,2,4,5,6.

Together, we are "Changing" Lives One Diaper at a Time

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



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

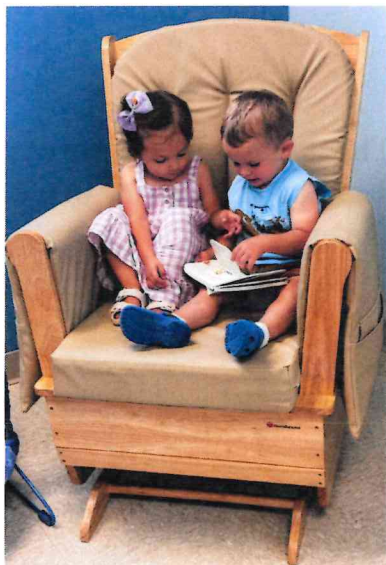
Blessing of the Backpacks

On August 9th our church family gathered for a special blessing of the backpacks for our students, teachers, and school personnel as they prepare for the upcoming academic school year. Everyone received a backpack tag highlighting the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25) as a special reminder that God's love guides their words and actions. During Sunday School, the children painted affirmation rocks with encouraging words as a special reminder of God's love as they start the new school year.

Summer Sunday School

CE is so grateful to Tammy Rath and Diane Peterson for sharing their gift of teaching and creating amazing lessons for the children to learn and explore God's creation this summer. Thank you to Kendra Monteith, for being so brave to teach her peers about bugs.

Rally Day Kicks-off Book Drive



Rally Day (Sept 13) marks the kick-off of Christian Education for all ages. It also kicks-off a Sunday School book drive! Part of the nursery renovation was a brand new library and it shed a glaring light on our outdated elementary and middle school books. If you would like to purchase a brand new book for our classrooms, please browse the titles on our Amazon Wish List or see hard copies at church on Sept 13th. Your donated book will be commemorated with a special name plate. The teachers are also inviting book donors to come to the classroom to read your book with the class! Thank you for supporting the Christian faith formation of our young people and bringing the joy of a brand new book.

Check out the Amazon Book Wish List at: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/15VY5S5LDVM7E?ref_=wl_share

Grandparent's Day Celebration

Sunday School is celebrating Grandparent's Day on Sunday, September 13th after church. Grandparents and grandchildren (age 14 and under) will enjoy sweet and savory snacks and lemonade, create a card, have family photos taken, and decorate a frame to put the photo into. Please RSVP at church by September 6th. This year's family craft theme is "Tied Together by Love."

RSVP no later than Sunday, September 6th.



MISSIONS

Backpack Event

A big thank you to everyone who volunteered at the ECC Backpack Event on July 30th and August 1st. Project Backpack assembled 1,757 backpacks (a new high) filled with school supplies and distributed over 825 to students in need on Saturday, August 1st.

ECC Student Life continues to get calls and is providing backpacks to students unable to attend the event. Any leftover backpacks will be sent to schools, per request to be distributed directly to students. There were 211 volunteers providing 496 volunteer hours.

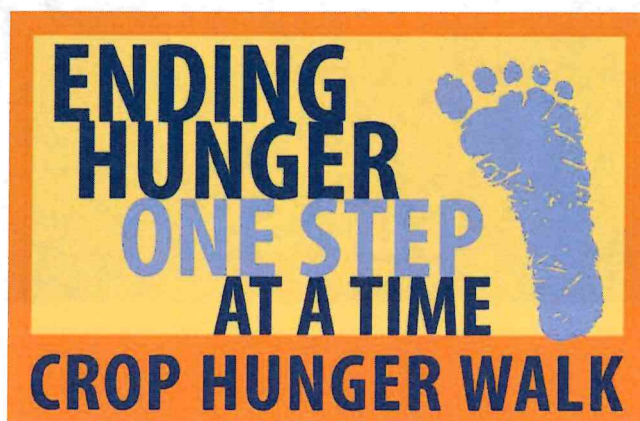
What a great community event for St Paul's to participate in, simply amazing.



Elgin CROP Hunger Walk

The Elgin CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, September 27th at 1:00 p.m. at Gail Borden Library. It's a 2 mile walk. Look for a sign-up sheet and donation collection envelopes starting on September 6th. What is CROP Hunger Walk? Go to this website: <https://resources.crophungerwalk.org/about-the-crop-hunger-walk-and-cws/>

The Kick-off Rally is August 30th at 1:00 p.m. at Gail Borden Library. Speakers will be State Representative Anna Moeller and CWS Representative Heather Wilson. Please reach out to Barb Kamp if you are interested in going.



Vineyard Breakfast Ministry is Back!

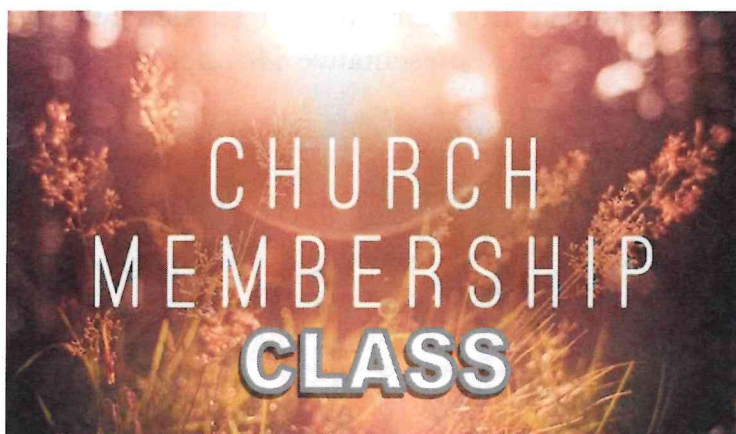
Hey, Early Risers! This service opportunity is for you. Vineyard Breakfast Ministry in downtown Elgin will resume serving breakfast on Monday & Tuesdays. St. Paul's will resume serving pancakes, eggs, and sausage (or bacon) the **first Monday of the month** at 6:30 a.m. starting October 5th. Be on the look out for a sign up sheet.



EVANGELISM

New Member Class

Sunday, October 4th - Have you been thinking about becoming a member of St. Paul's? Come for a time of learning, sharing, and asking questions about church membership, St. Paul's life and ministry, and our denomination of the United Church of Christ. We will meet at the Mission House after worship on Sunday, October 4th for 45-60 minutes. New Members will be welcomed in worship on November 1st during our special 150th Anniversary service. - Pastor Liz



Open & Affirming Means Belonging

Pastor Liz and Maya Garner represented St. Paul's on the podcast *Empowered and Out* with an emphatic "yes!" for the episode "Can Faith Be LGBTQ+ Affirming? Finding Churches Where You Truly Belong."

From the podcast description: What if the question isn't: "Am I allowed in this church?" But instead: "Will I actually BELONG here?"

There is a huge difference between being tolerated, being welcomed, and being genuinely affirmed.

In this episode of *Empowered & Out*, Reverend Liz Patz, Maya Garner, and I have an honest conversation about LGBTQ+ people and faith — including some of the questions many people carry before ever stepping inside a church:

"Will they really accept me?"

"Can I bring my partner?"

"Can I be completely myself?"

"Is the rainbow flag actually meaningful?"

And for those who have experienced religious hurt: "Can I ever trust a church again?"

We talk about what "Open and Affirming" actually means, how to identify genuinely affirming communities, scripture and historical context, the 1946 translation discussion, online worship, religious hurt, healing, and belonging.

But perhaps the most important message is this: If faith still matters to you, you deserve the opportunity to find a community where you do not have to hide pieces of yourself in order to belong.



Pastor Gay Bouwmeester

We offer our congratulations and prayers of joy and blessing upon Gay Bouwmeester on her official installation at York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Illinois on Sunday, August 16th. Gay was St. Paul's former pianist and started her first ministry appointment as interim at York Center last November.

Congratulations, Pastor Gay!



FELLOWSHIP & HOSPITALITY

Card Crafting

We will be having a card creating night on Friday, September 18th at 6:30 p.m. here at the church.

Come and create your own Thanksgiving card, Thinking of You card, and a Bookmark. Cost is \$15.00.



Coffee Hour

Love the coffee, juice, and treats? Help keep it going! If you can sponsor a coffee hour, use the sign-up sheet outside of the kitchen. Questions? Contact Janet Werner at janwer@aol.com.

THANK YOU,
Fellowship/Hospitality Ministry



WORSHIP SERVERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Greeters:

September 6 - Chuck & Karen Smith
September 13 - Kandy Jones & Elsie Ward
September 20 - Bill & Karen Snyder
September 27 - Fred & Karen Vollman

Ushers:

September 6 - Linda Meglin, Mike & Ginny Mursewick, & Ken Volkening
September 13 - Dave & Pat Thompson, Craig Whyte, & Dale Volkening
September 20 - Dan Heinrich, Vern Knaak, Connie Moraca, & Mike Westerman
September 27 - Chuck Smith, Ryan, Rick & Sara Tustin

Scripture Readers:

September 6 - Jessica Thomas
September 13 - Jim Werner
September 20 - Anne Heinrich
September 27 - Bill Snyder

Counters:

September 6 - Judy Reimer
September 13 - Fred Vollman
September 20 - Sandy Volkening
September 27 - Linda Meglin

Media:

September 6 - Sandy Volkening
September 13 - Ryan Smith
September 20 - TBD
September 27 - 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 June and July receipts were \$27,499.37 which includes giving for fixed expenses as well as charitable giving. See below:

	June	July	Year-to-Date
Offering			
Pledged Offering	\$11,729.37	\$8,173.00	\$108,032.37
Contributions (Non-Pledged)	\$2,415.00	\$1,444.00	\$13,031.80
Loose Offering	\$326.00	\$412.00	\$2,227.18
Denominational Support			
OCWM (Illinois Conference)	\$415.00	\$450.00	\$4,898.50
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$405.00
Strengthen the Church	\$75.00	\$50.00	\$295.00
Neighborhoods in Need	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$10.00
Church Fund Support			
Land, Building and Equipment Fund	\$60.00	\$1,060.00	\$8,472.50
Coffee Hour donations	\$102.00	\$53.00	\$564.00
General Fund	\$0.00	\$80.00	\$162.00
Scholarship Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
"J" Dollars	\$38.00	\$29.00	\$613.00
PADS	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Specific Ministry Support			
Music Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$90.00
Mission Projects	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Diaper Ministry (Including May Community Drive)	\$0.00	\$372.00	\$922.00
Fellowship and Hospitality	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Creation Care Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Seasonal Giving			
Easter Breakfast	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$545.00
Lent/Easter Offering	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,125.00
Heritage Fest	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Offering	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00

	June	July	Year-to-Date
Church Project Support			
Constitution Review	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Nursery Makeover	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
New Chairs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,344.51
Community Support			
Pads 5K Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Elgin Pride	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pads Emergency Appeal	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other			
CD Interest	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,334.83
CD (transferring to higher rate CD)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,000.00
Memorial Giving	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,865.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Flowers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Easter Memorial Flowers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$474.00
Initial Offering (Related to Giving Envelope)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$51.00
150th Celebration Dinner/Butter Braid Sale & Donation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,812.00
Donation to CE for VBS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$1,000 Donation to CE for Confirmation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Trees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CE Pancake Breakfast	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$201.00
In and Out	\$66.00	\$0.00	\$72.00
Total:	\$15,326.37	\$12,173.00	\$188,207.69

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

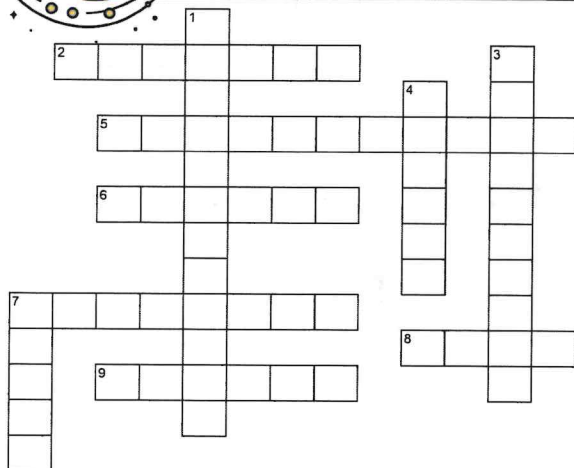
Karen Westerman
Financial Secretary
847-727-9973

Puzzle!



BEATTITUDES

Fill in the blanks below to complete the crossword. Answers are based on Matthew 5:1-13, NIV.



ACROSS

2. _____ and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.
5. Blessed are the _____, for they will see God.
6. Blessed are those who _____ and thirst after righteousness.
7. Blessed are the _____, for they will receive mercy.
8. Blessed are the _____, for they will inherit the earth.
9. Blessed are those who hunger and _____, for they will be filled.

DOWN

1. Blessed are the _____, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
3. Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness' sake.
4. Great is your _____ in heaven.
7. Blessed are those who _____, for they will be comforted.

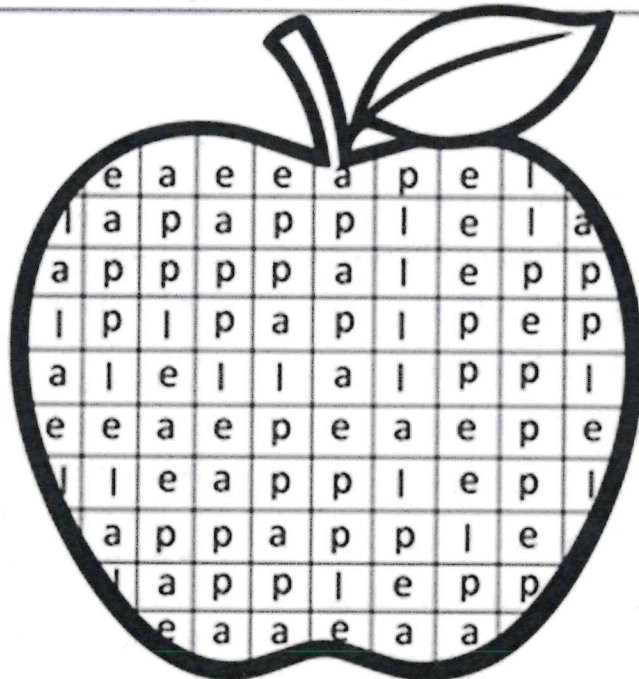
Answer key: 2 Across: Rejoice, 5 Across: pure in heart, 6 Across: hunger
7 Across: merciful, 8 Across: meek, 9 Across: thirst, 1 Down: poor in spirit
3 Down: persecuted, 4 Down: reward, 7 Down: mourn



Apple of Your Eye

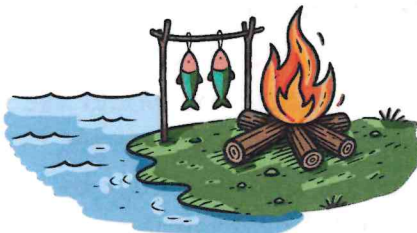
"Apple of your eye" means something very special that you protect. As school starts again, remember what God says in Proverbs 7:2 (NIV): "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye."

Can you find the word "apple" 12 times in the puzzle?
Look up, down, across, and even backward!



Bible Quiz

After his resurrection, Jesus asked one of his disciples the same question three times: "Do you love me?" The disciple felt hurt, wondering why Jesus kept asking. Who was this disciple?



- A. James
- B. John
- C. Philip
- D. (Simon) Peter

Answer: D (John 21:17)

WHATEVER MY LOT,
THOU HAST TAUGHT ME TO SAY
It is well, it is well with my soul.



9/02 Alyssa Garcia
 9/02 Tenley Volkening
 9/03 Jennifer Volkening
 9/03 Mary Wilms
 9/04 Kimberly Toth
 9/05 Bill Wilson
 9/11 Rita Rucker
 9/15 Eric Hayley
 9/16 Russell Gable
 9/20 Lee Thielke
 9/22 Florence Hansford
 9/23 Aidan Flentge
 9/23 Judith Olsen
 9/24 Quinn Post
 9/25 Otto Einwich, Jr.
 9/27 Susan Wolfe
 9/28 Tristan Volkening
 9/28 Declan Wilson

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



9/01 Gay & Paul Bouwmeester
 9/04 Mark & Becky Kelly
 9/18 Michael & Karen Westerman
 9/21 Dave & Katie Kaye
 9/27 Robert & Judith Reimer



Upcoming Events:

- Sunday, September 13 - Rally Day & Grandparents Day
- Friday, September 18 - Card Crafting
- Saturday, September 19 - Izaak Walton Creek Clean-Up
- Sunday, September 20 - Blessing of the Animals
- Thursday, September 24 - Advent Devotional Workshop (Zoom)
- Saturday, September 26 - Advent Devotional Workshop (Mission House)
- Sunday, September 27 - Elgin Crop Hunger Walk
- Saturday, October 3 - German Dinner Heritage Fest
- Sunday, October 4 - New Member Class

Worship Online

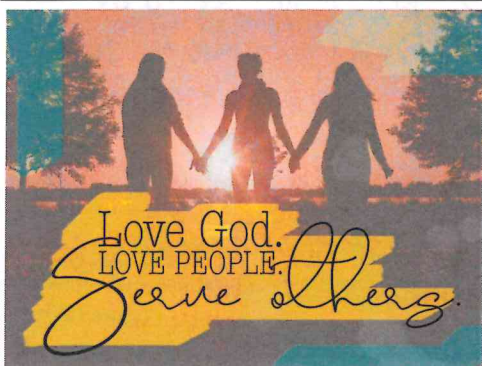
Watch our Services live on YouTube every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. or watch them when you have time.

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 and click on the give link.



October Newsletter Deadline:

September 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!

