

THE CHIMES

A Publication of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Elgin, Ill.

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Unexpected Places

Every other year the United Church of Christ (UCC) gathers for General Synod. During this national gathering, delegates and visitors come together to make decisions and recommendations, learn about the ministries of the wider church, and spend time in worship and fellowship. General Synod 2015 was in Cleveland, Ohio, from June 26-30, with the theme "Unexpected Places."

The theme was inspired by Jacob's dream in **Genesis 28:10-17**:

*... Jacob woke from his sleep and said,
"Surely our GOD is in this place—and I did not know it!"
And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place!
This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

I have attended Synod twice and have never felt more excited about the UCC than when surrounded by thousands of faithful people from churches around country. During these gatherings I could not help but think, "Surely our God is in this place."

Finding God at a national church gathering may be expected. Where are the unexpected places you have experienced God? In your home, the grocery store, a doctor's office, the deathbed of a loved one, at work, on the golf course . . .

God does not need a gathering of thousands to show up. God can be present anywhere you are.

As you go through this summer, look for God to show up in unexpected places. And when God does show up, celebrate by saying, "How awesome is this place!"

Journeying with you,

Pastor Jill

Religion in the News

A church in Gilbert, Ariz., received a blessing from the U.S. Supreme Court. The town of Gilbert refused to allow Good News Presbyterian Church from posting roadside signs the day before the service encouraging motorists to attend.

The banners were 6 sq ft and directed churchgoers to Sunday worship at an elementary schools. Gilbert called the announcements “directional signs” and said they could not be placed in the right-of-way 12 hours before the event. Rev. Clyde Reed, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian group that argued the case for free, sued the town of Gilbert, and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled unanimously in favor of the church in late June.

The court ruling will make it more difficult for governments to treat signs differently based on their content. Towns and cities across the country provide more leeway for signs of political and ideological nature, and that will all change following this decision.

“It’s almost universal,” said Lisa Soronen, executive director of the State Local Legal Center in Washington, D.C. “A majority of cities will now have to make a change.”

Gilbert officials claim their action was not meant to discriminate against religion, and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, twice, before the case was taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court. Gilbert hopes the decision will provide some clarity moving forward.

“I’ve been a pastor for over 40 years, and believe me when I say I never dreamed my small church signs would be a topic for the U.S. Supreme Court,” said Reed. “The government shouldn’t be able to treat our church’s religious speech worse than it treats other speech.”

Capital Campaign—Building to Serve

I’d like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that when our Capital Campaign ends in a year and a half, we will still have a balance left on our mortgage. So far our campaign has received \$658,000 in donations toward roughly \$850,000 in pledges. At the end of June, donations were \$33,000 ahead of where we should be based on when everyone said they would pay their pledges. While our campaign has been running extremely well, I just want to make sure no one is surprised when we still have a mortgage left at the end of the Capital Campaign. Next month, I’ll report on what it looks like our balance will be at the end of the campaign.

Again, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of St. Paul’s **BUILDING TO SERVE – “From Christ, through us, to others . . .”** Capital Campaign.

If you haven’t already made a pledge or contributed to the Capital Campaign, it’s never too late. We can use everyone’s help. We’ve got 1 1/2 more years to go. If for whatever reason you weren’t able to pledge during our initial campaign, you should consider making St. Paul’s part of your estate planning (will, living trust, life insurance, IRA/401(k), etc.) If you would like to pledge or have any questions, you can call me at 847.476.8652 or email me at dlthmpsn3@gmail.com. If you’re not sure but would like us to put together a group seminar on bequests to answer any questions, please let me or the Church office know and we’ll get right on it.

David Thompson

Capital Campaign Chairman

Scholarship Report 2015

There were two individuals who applied for a scholarship this year. The applicants must meet the following requirements: financial need, involvement in the life of St. Paul's United Church of Christ and academic standing. After careful review of both applications and prayerful consideration, the committee has awarded scholarships to the following individuals:

Alison Smith, who will be a junior at Judson University, majoring in special education; and
Daniel Wayeshe, who will be a sophomore at Southern Illinois University, majoring in aviation.

"I am so honored and blessed to have received the church scholarship again this year," said Smith. "I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation. This gift allows me to continue to further my education at Judson University. St. Paul's generosity and faithfulness provides me with the opportunity to follow God's leading and become a special education teacher. Thank you for your financial support, encouragement and prayers. I am so blessed to have such an amazing support team."

The Scholarship Committee, which includes Bonnie Starr, Doug Volkening and Karen Westerman, and the recipients, would like to thank everyone who has and continue to support our Scholarship Fund.

Wider Mission Ministry

Thank you for your generous support of our 2015 Lenten Mission Project. We collected a total of \$820 for Back Bay Mission!

We also want to thank all who helped make our Firefighters Breakfast a success. Thanks to those who donated food. Thanks to those who donated the \$300 that we split between the firehouses. And thanks to those who stayed to eat and especially to those who helped to clean up afterwards! Every one of you helped to make our guests feel welcome.

Beginning in July we will have not one, but two mission projects for you. We will collect school supplies for Illinois Park Preschool/Kindergarten through the end of August. Be sure to **STICK TO THE LIST** for what they need! For our new members: Illinois Park student body is almost entirely made up of students from low-income families. Few can afford basic school supplies. Because this is an at-risk preschool program (the highest grade is kindergarten) their needs are not the same as an elementary student's. Also: Karen Smith teaches at Illinois Park!!

But another opportunity that also benefits needy school children has come to our attention. Since 2009, First Baptist Church, Elgin, has been giving needy children a **NEW** pair of shoes to start school. That first year they gave away 403 pairs of shoes. They need more help to reach their goal of 1,550 pairs of shoes this year. We can help in two ways: 1) Buy a **NEW** pair of tennis shoes in any size between child's size 10 and adult 10 for boys and girls. Put them in the box at church by July 19, and 2) If you can't go shopping or can't afford the full price of a pair of shoes you can still help. Write a check for whatever you can afford (or cash is OK), mark "**SHOES**" on the check or envelope. We will write one check to First Baptist Church and they will do the shopping for you! Again, checks/money must be in our hands no later than July 19.

Below is a list of needed school supplies:

Crayons

Washable markers (thick/thin)

2-pocket folders

3-prong 2-pocket folders

Dry erase markers (thick/thin)

Computer paper

3 x 5 index cards

3 x 5 Post-it notes

Baby wipes (alcohol free)

Kleenex

Pencils

Colored pencils

Glue sticks – BIG FAT ones

Zip-lock plastic bags – gallon size

Zip-lock plastic bags – sandwich size

Zip-lock plastic bags - snack size

Tracking the Budget

The total receipts for the month of May were \$15,181. Our spendable income came to \$14,680, including OCWM income of \$200.

Our charitable income for May was \$20 to World Service, \$25 to One Great Hour of Sharing, \$135 to Strengthen the Church, and \$321 for Firefighters' Mission.

Many Thanks

Dear St. Paul's UCC:

Thank you very much for your recent contribution to The Interfaith Food Pantry. Your contribution of food will help those of us who volunteer to work at various jobs at the pantry to continue to assist those in our community.

Thank you,

Mary Hewitt, Pantry Board Member

The Officers and Members of the Burlington Fire Department gratefully acknowledge your recent contribution and thank you for your continued support.

Thank you for your generous donation, Chief Craig Whyte

Dear Members of St. Paul's:

Thank you so much for the gift cards for my retirement. It is much appreciated.

Judy Reimer

We would like to thank Bonnie Starr for the beautiful tablecloths she made for the tables in the narthex. St. Paul's is so blessed to have Bonnie share her sewing talent with us.

Fellowship Ministry

Thank you to everyone who helped with the "Time for Change" fundraiser. Over the past several weeks, the members of St. Paul's have helped to raise \$83.46 for Little Angels by just bringing in their spare change. I continue to be amazed and impressed by the impact St. Paul's has in the community. Our congregation continues to be the hands and feet of Jesus and make a big difference in the lives of others. Thank you once again for supporting the angels that I hold so dear to my heart. They are so thankful for the love and compassion you show them.

Alison Smith

Vacation Bible School

This year's Vacation Bible School—Never "LEGO" of God—will be July 27-30 from 6-8 p.m. Children will use Lego blocks to learn Bible stories, and on the final night will watch The Lego Movie. Please fill out the form attached to this newsletter if your child is interested in attending.

July Greeters

July 5: Fred & Karen Vollman; July 12: Arlene & Sue Huber; July 19: Polly Russell & Janet Werner; and July 28: Ralph & Elsie Ward

Staff:

Jill Terpstra, Pastor
Linda Becker, Secretary
Jon Kobel, Choir Director
Gay Bouwmeester, Piano Accompanist
Bill Wilson, Chimes Editor

Council:

President – Anne Heinrich

Vice President – Karen Westerman

Financial Secretary – Sandy Volkening

Treasurer – Myron Meglin/Dave Thompson

Recording Secretary – Cindy Heinrich

Christian Education – Karen Smith

Evangelism – Polly Russell

Fellowship/Hospitality – Janet Werner

Mission – Barb Kamp

Calling & Caring – Ginny Mursewick

Properties – Dan Heinrich

Stewardship – JoAnn Pate

Worship – Vernon Knaak