

# THE STEEPLE

## Choices

Imagine you are standing in a hallway. This is an infinite hallway with an infinite number of doors. Behind each door is a prize, but the prizes are not evenly distributed. Some doors have very valuable prizes, while others have very worthless prizes. You are allowed to open any number of doors, but you can only choose one prize to keep. Once you open a door, you cannot go back and choose a different prize. The question is: how should you choose a prize?

One strategy is to open the first door you come to and accept the prize behind it. This is a safe strategy, but it is also the least likely to result in a valuable prize. Another strategy is to open as many doors as possible, hoping to find a very valuable prize. This strategy is riskier, but it also has the potential to result in a much greater reward.

This is called the infinite hallway thought experiment and it is designed to illustrate the counterintuitive issues we face in a society of abundance. When you have so many choices, it is hard to imagine being satisfied. We could always do more. Maybe we should leave old habits behind for greater possible future benefits. Maybe true happiness is just a few more posts or videos away on our social media. We live with an abundance of choices and it is somewhat paralyzing. One study showed that grocery stores sell far less jars of jam when they have too many varieties of jam. The stores that have fewer choices actually sell more. That seems counterintuitive, but we are getting exhausted with the choices we are facing each day.

Perhaps this is why Jesus spoke about how blessed the poor were. Perhaps abundance of material and time options is a challenge. The modern disciple of Jesus Christ must decide how to navigate through the crippling abundance of materialism using the empowering abundance of God's grace. We are encouraged to count our blessings. This can often start with possessions and good fortunes. However, let us be attentive to the blessings of faith, love, mercy, and grace from God. God's patience with us is infinite and so we keep searching for prizes in life. Maybe once we find our relationship with God, we should stop there and treasure that prize.

*in Christ,  
Pastor Rob*

## MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

Make A Joyful Noise was an evening organized for young families on July 19, 2023 by the Christian Education Committee. Families rotated to several different rooms to learn some of the ways we can use music to praise God. Families learned about notes and created their own music with stickers. In another room the children made their own tambourines out of paper plates, beans, stickers, and ribbon. In the choir room, families were able to watch others play instruments, listen to Gospel music, and were able to play some different types of percussion instruments. In the Chapel, everyone sung and signed the song "Walking with Jesus." Finally, everyone enjoyed a "musical" treat of Rice Krispies treats. It was a wonderful night of learning, playing, and praising God.



# Announcements



A well-known story from the Gospels tells of the time Jesus and His disciples fed more than 5,000 men, women, and children. Jesus is at it again but this time He will be working through His followers at First United Presbyterian Church to feed thousands of people through a program called Rise Against Hunger.

On Wednesday, October 4 starting at 5:45 pm volunteers will gather in the gym to package meals using Rise Against Hunger's time-tested process that delivered 44 million meals to 38 countries, including the United States, in 2022.

Rise Against Hunger meal-packing events provide a fast and fun way to lend meaningful help to people in critical need. The process uses an assembly line to package all meals in about two hours. It is a great way to make a real difference in a very short time.

Since 2005, Rise Against Hunger volunteer groups have packaged nearly 590 million meals, relying on groups of any size in locations across the world to package the meals – this is where FUPC comes into play.

The packaging process is efficient, quick, and anyone of any age can take part. Jesus will be present in the Spirit as FUPC feeds the hungry, but we will need the congregation to come in person to make the event a success. We hope those coming will consider inviting others too. There will be opportunities to ask questions and RSVP between worship services through October 1. Whether you have signed up or not, all are welcome.

For more information, contact Jim Nicholas, 618-980-4800, jgnich@aol.com.

## *from the Trustees*

In addition to routine maintenance, Trustees focused on:

- Maintaining garden areas
- Maintaining the Westminster property and grounds
- Seeking bids to resurface the main parking lot
- Seeking bids to replace leaking windows in the Conference Room
- Repairing playground equipment
- Investigating installing drop ceilings in the old wing areas
- Seeking bids to repair one wall in the kitchen prior to floor installation

Thanks to everyone who volunteers to help keep our Church building and grounds in good shape!



### T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

The staff created these shirts for themselves as a parody of the St Louis City soccer team logo.

Many church members asked if they could order shirts also. So, we are making it available. In the future, we may use these shirts for special events. So, join in the fun!



### United Bells Ringing our Praise!

United Bells resumed rehearsals on August 30 and will meet every Wednesday at 5:30 pm. Experienced ringers and anyone interested in learning to ring are welcome. Please consider joining this committed group who work, laugh, and pray together, all to the glory of God! Please call or email Julia Weeks, 618-531-5002, juliaaweeks@gmail.com for more information.

# Adult Fellowship

## September 8: Merry Mates

Merry Mates will meet for dessert, drinks, and Bingo on September 8.

We will gather in the Church library at 6:00 pm and eat in Eversull Hall at 6:30 pm.

Please contact Host Debbie Reeder, **618-806-0715** by September 6 to let us know how many will be attending.

All are welcome!!

## September 9: Sand Dollars

The Sand Dollars will gather for their **annual fall picnic** on **Saturday, September 9 at 4:00 pm** at the Church Pavilion.

*(We'll meet in Eversull Hall if the weather is really bad.)*

If you are a family (*children included*), couple, or single adult and would like to share a meal in a very relaxed atmosphere with Christian fellowship, please join us.

Anyone interested, contact our Skippers, Brenda and Joe Fedak, **618-558-7086**, or Jan Nevois, **618-402-7170**.

## September 14: Book Club

In September, the Book Club will discuss *The Boys* by Ron & Clint Howard.

We will begin at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Please contact Joyce Dyer, **joycejdyer@att.net** for the Zoom ID and passcode.

The book selection for October is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

## Potlucks with a Purpose

PWAP met at the end of July, enjoyed a meal together, and decided to make our donation to the Belleville Police

Department to provide emergency housing vouchers to people in crisis. We are hoping to secure a speaker from that organization to speak at our next meeting on **Tuesday, October 24.**

In addition, we agreed to provide for and supervise the Coffee Hour on **Sunday, October 8.** We will be incorporating an Autumn theme. More information will be forthcoming.

Finally, we discussed several other potential speakers and organizations to which we can donate. We look forward to the October meeting and we hope to see more women attending.

*In faith, Sheila Misselhorn*



*from the Mission Committee*

**SEPTEMBER 24-30**

**Adult & Church-Wide Mission Trip**

The Adult Mission Trip will again be to Mound Ridge Retreat Center in Cook Station, MO. It is near St. James. Mound Ridge is about a two-hour drive from Church, close enough that you may come for a day if you do not feel you can stay the entire time. We plan to carpool leaving Sunday afternoon and returning the following Saturday. There will be no cost to you other than personal expenses for an evening's outing. Project details will follow later. All skill levels are welcome! If you think you might be interested please save these dates on your calendar and talk to Jim Nicholas or Andy Morgan.



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS



We are looking for volunteers for the Wednesday night meal program. There are so many options to choose from. Grab your family or friends, pick a Wednesday, and prepare a meal (Jess and Leah are at Church to help). If you hate to cook then how about ordering pizza? Or sandwiches? Love to shop? Make a menu and shop for ingredients, drop everything off at Church and we will take care of the rest. Or donate funds and the Wednesday crew will do it all!

Text or call Jess Mokriakow for more information, 618-910-3738.



# Caring Ministries



## September 27: *Prayer Shawl Ministry*

September 11 is the anniversary date for this wonderful ministry that began in 2011!!

If you like to crochet or knit or would like to learn, join the fellowship of this exceptional ministry on Wednesday, September 27, at 9:30 am in The Commons.

Be part of this outreach to those celebrating joy or needing comfort. Prayer shawls are in the bookcase in the Narthex. For more information contact Mary Teague, 618-920-7589 or Betty McRoberts, 618-235-3197.

Welcome home Betty!!

## F a m i l y   N e w s

### *Our Deepest Sympathy*

For Betty Scherrer and family on the death of Betty's cousin, **Rev. Larry Patton**, who died on July 29.

For Sue Perez and family on the death of Sue's mother, **LaVerne Moll**, who died on August 4 in Swansea, IL.

For the family and friends of **Ella Mae Holtman** who died on August 9 in Belleville, IL

### *from the Deacons*

The Deacons met on August 9. Fourteen members were present. Deacon contacts made the previous month totaled 282 (34 calls, 181 cards, 42 visits and 25 texts/emails).

Hospitality table plans were confirmed and fall activities were discussed. The Deacon Thinking of You List now includes 30 Church members.

Please plan your participation in a 100th birthday card shower for **Dr. Katie Wright** on October 8, 2023.



## PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS SPECIAL OFFERING PARTICIPATION

On World Communion Sunday, **on October 1**, we celebrate that Christ's peace extends throughout all creation. Whenever the Church gathers for worship, we are assured of Christ's peace. We celebrate that we are connected, we are loved, and we are not alone. We worship together and are fed from Scripture and at Christ's table of peace.

Extending the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith, a witness to what it means for us to be the Church together. Through participation in the Peace and Global Witness Offering, our Church is extending Christ's peace throughout our community and the world.

Be Loved and we are not alone

# Discipleship Ministries

Thoughtful  
Christian  
Gathering

Sunday

Adult Discipleship  
9:15 am Sundays

Adults

This month, Thoughtful Christian Gathering is continuing a six-week study called ***Being Reformed, Faith Seeking Understanding; Discipleship: The Way of Jesus.***

On September 3 we will be discussing Session 5: Pathways of Discipleship and on September 10 we will be discussing Session 6: The Fruits of Discipleship.

We will be starting a new five-week study on September 17 from Thoughtful Christian Gathering called ***Making Moral Decisions.***

**These classes are hybrid, meeting in-person and via Zoom at 9:15 am.**

For details and to receive study materials, contact Rhonda Eugea at [reugea@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:reugea@firstunitedpres.org). Login information for Zoom is included in the eWeekly every Friday.



Weekday



## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Men's Bible Study Group meets hybrid every Wednesday morning at 8:30 am, both in-person in the Vista Room and via Zoom. Contact the Church Office for more info.

## WOMEN'S CIRCLES

FUPC two women's groups will resume meeting in-person and via Zoom. Gathering monthly from September through May, their purpose is to nurture women's faith through prayer and Bible study. If you would like more information, please contact a leader.

- Lamplighters Circle will meet September 19 at 1:00 pm, Amy Brummitt, 618-235-4226.
- Lydia Circle will meet September 21 at 10:00 am, Jan Jensen, 626-894-6580.

Children

## Children and Worship at FUPC

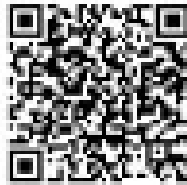
All children are welcome in worship at FUPC! There are also two special places for children during the 10:30 am service.

## Childcare during Worship for children birth through age 3

Two caring volunteers are in the Toddler Room ready to welcome children ages 3 and younger. The volunteers are members of FUPC and have been trained and background checked.

## Children's Chapel (age 3 through grade 3)

After a special time with the pastors, children are invited to leave with a Worship Leader and Greeters to continue to worship in Children's Chapel. This is a special place where children will hear stories of God's people and respond.



Youth

On Wednesdays, children in kindergarten through 5th grade (GFF and PYC) will gather for dinner, games, and faith conversations. This fall and winter we will be using the Growing in God's Love curriculum. In September, we will learn about the Body of Christ.

Youth in grades 6 through 12 (TIM and KIX) will gather for dinner, games, and faith conversations. This fall and winter we will be using the Faith Questions curriculum. Our discussions this month are about relationships with others and our relationship with God.

If you still need to sign up your child or youth please contact Rhonda Eugea at [reugea@firstunited.pres.org](mailto:reugea@firstunited.pres.org) or scan the QR code and fill out a digital form.

# Giving and Serving



## MOBILE MARKET LOCATION CHANGE



We are excited to announce that the Mobile Market serving Belleville District 118 families will be moving to FUPC this month.

This is a partnership with the St. Louis Area Foodbank, District 118, and FUPC.

We provide the volunteers to hand out whatever the Foodbank delivers to us. We will meet by 8:00 am at the main entrance of the Church on Thursday, September 21 to sort food and put it in the folks' cars as they drive through the portico.

Hopefully, we will stay drier this year than we did last year. Come join us for a great time and a good cause. Contact Laurie Brown, [laurie0811@att.net](mailto:laurie0811@att.net) or Judy Stratton, [judy55stratton@gmail.com](mailto:judy55stratton@gmail.com) with questions.



## SUMMER SACK LUNCH PROGRAM - THANK YOU!!

Our Church fed an average of 250 children each Friday as part of a broader collaboration between Kids for Christ and five other local churches. We were so fortunate and thankful for all the wonderful people who did the grocery shopping, made sandwiches, packed sack lunches, delivered meals to kids, and for those who gave contributions to the fund that fuels these lunches. Our Evangelism Committee blessed the children with messages of hope each week. Into each lunch sack, they tucked bracelets, stamp sets, coloring sheets, and invitations to join us for worship and special children's programs.

We especially thank all those who prayed for the children and those who were able to participate in any way to feed the children this summer. A special thanks to our "hands-on" team for their faithful, caring work. Many hands made the work a pleasure from groups of college students, families, and volunteers from age 7 to 98! Nancy Kreeb, Abby Smith

## COFFEE HOUR UPDATE



A big Thank You to the July coffee hour hosts. We truly appreciate the variety and creativity your efforts have produced. There are openings in August through December for Coffee Hour hosting. Please check the sign-up sheet by the kitchenette.

# GIVE a MEAL a MONTH

*September*

Give-A-Meal-A-Month for September will be a collection of food and money for the Community Interfaith Food Pantry located on West Main Street in Belleville. For the last couple months, the Food Pantry has exceeded its revenue by \$30,000. We had over 600 families needing food in July. As a result, we have decreased the amount of food we are distributing. Our assigned items are still spaghetti noodles, crackers, and canned soup. Donations of staple foods and money will be greatly appreciated. Bags will be handed out after Church on September 3 and filled and brought to Church by September 10. Please make checks payable to FUPC and designated for the Food Pantry. If you have been hoarding those bags at home....now is the time to fill and return them!!

The FUPC August collection was 323 pounds of food!!!



# Sunday Snapshots

## New Members and Sacrament of Baptism

On Sunday, August 13, **Charlotte Reilly Barry-McQuage** received the Sacrament of Baptism. Charlotte is pictured with her parents, Angela McQuage and James Barry and her Godparents, Elizabeth McQuage and Anthony & Heather Ingargiola. James and Angela also joined as new members as well.



Recipients from left to right:  
Austin Dyer, Zach Tambala

*Not pictured: Nathan Dyer*

Presenters: Jackie Bainter, Claudia Brinkley



Recipients from left to right:  
Amber Lankford, Delaney Giles  
Presenters: Joy Baltz, Claudia Brinkley



## 2023 Scholarship Recipients

The Christian Education Committee is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 Presbyterian and Ray A. Angerer Scholarships:

Many thanks to those who donated to the scholarships of First United Presbyterian Church. Because of your generosity five young members of our Church will receive money to help in their college fees. Amber Lankford will be a sophomore/junior at the University of Indianapolis; Delaney Giles will be a sophomore at Bradley University; Austin Dyer will be entering the University of Illinois as a freshman; Zach Tambala is a freshman who will continue to take classes at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville before transferring to Southern Illinois University; Nathaniel Dyer will be a junior at the University of Illinois. Donations to these important scholarships can still be made.

Again, we thank the members of our congregation. As those in our faith community continue to work diligently to achieve their educational goals, we want them to know that we support them on their path to educational enrichment. Congratulations to all our scholarship recipients and God's blessings as they each fulfill their life goals.

# September's Worship Focus:

## GROWING SPIRITUALLY

### the Steeple

To submit articles and suggestions each month, simply email the team!

Did you know?

[theSteeple@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:theSteeple@firstunitedpres.org)

### from Stewardship

"As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 25:14

Stewardship comes in many forms. It represents the dedication of time, treasure, and talents to the furtherance of the glory of God, BUT it is important to remember it is not a one-way street, nor is it one dimensional.

For example, children are gifts from God. Psalm 127:3, to love, to teach, before whom to model faith and works, and demonstrate trust in the Holy Spirit. As parents, we are called to show children the right way (Proverbs 22:6), teach through example integrity, soundness, and trust in our faith (Titus 2:2, 7, 8), demonstrate endurance and encouragement such that we might provide hope and build resilience (Romans 15:4), show the value and benefits of dwelling together in unity, harmony, and fellowship (Psalm 133:1), and to show how to live by faith, not simply by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

As our children return to school we do not need to have all the answers. In fact, part of the joy of parenting is slowly removing the scaffolds of protective parenthood and observing our children face and overcome ever increasing challenges. Once we recognize Scripture is useful in teaching (2 Timothy 3:16), we have the opportunity to instill within each child how much God loves them and how unconditional our love is for them, so that we and our children can fully enjoy and unlock all the wondrous blessings of childhood.

*For Thine is the glory,  
The Stewardship Committee*

## Staff Leaders

**Rev. Rob Dyer, Senior Pastor / Head of Staff**

[rdyer@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:rdyer@firstunitedpres.org)

**Rev. Alex Lysdahl, Associate Pastor**

[alysdahl@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:alysdahl@firstunitedpres.org)

**Rhonda Eugea,**

**Director of Christian Discipleship**

[reugea@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:reugea@firstunitedpres.org)

**Jami Olsen, Administrative Assistant**

[office@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:office@firstunitedpres.org)

**Dr. Andy Jensen, Director of Music**

[ajensen@firstunitedpres.org](mailto:ajensen@firstunitedpres.org)

**Mat Conway, Worship Music Leader**

**Diana Umali, Pianist / Accompanist**

**Dale Overstreet, Director of Audio /**

**Visual Ministries + Custodian**

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office open  
**Monday-Friday**  
**8:00 am-1:00 pm**

### Sundays

8:00 am Chapel  
9:00 am Chancel Choir  
9:15 am Thoughtful  
Christian Gathering  
10:30 am Sanctuary + Zoom

### Wednesdays

5:45 pm Children & Youth  
5:45 pm United Bells

