

THE STEEPLE



We've Got the Power!!

As you can see from the pictures below, our new solar panel array has been installed. In August, the fencing and Ameren inspection will be complete and then we can flip the switch to have all our electricity needs covered by our solar panels. I love the idea that we have had all the power necessary to run our church showering down upon us for years now. And now, we have equipped ourselves to receive and use that power for the electricity needs of the church.

I love this idea because I believe that God has been showering us with all the power necessary to run all aspects of our church. We have been showered with faith, blessings, people, opportunities, willpower, generosity, grace, and more! As we continue to mature and grow together in our faith, we will continue to help each other to become equipped to receive and use this power for the ministries and mission that God has for us to do together and in our individual lives.

We do not live in times of scarcity. We live in abundance. The world has enough energy, food, water, shelter, and other blessings. We just need to have the desire to help each other to receive, share, and use this abundance. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

*in Christ,
Pastor Rob*



We've Got the Power!!



Announcements

Wednesday Night Meals

Wow did that summer go fast! The first day of school is just a couple of weeks away which means our Wednesday night youth activities will be starting up! We need volunteers to prepare or donate funds for a meal. There are so many options you can choose to be involved. You can do it all! Shop, prepare and serve. Just shop and drop off. Order pizza! There are many ways you could be part of Wednesday night meals. Text or email Jess Mokriakow to find out more information, jmokrakow@gmail.com or (618) 910-3738.

Thanks,
Jess Mokriakow and Leah Lankford
Wednesday night meal coordinators

Fall Kickoff: Wednesdays

Kick-off for Wednesday Night Ministry is August 28! Our theme is Big Faith, Big Fun! Come for a night of big food and big fun! All students in Kindergarten through 12th grade are welcome. Registration is required. Use the QR code above.

Coming Soon!

The Mission Committee in cooperation with the Member Connections Committee will be hosting a Mini Mission Fair for the Monthly Gathering on Sunday, September 15 from 11:45 am-1:30 pm. Learn about FUPC missions. Activities include food pantry bingo, toddler/preschool mobile market, and 'Rise Against Dirt' for ages 5 to adult (assemble hygiene kits for PCUSA mission). Lunch will be provided.

Budget Update

So far... So great! Our congregation exceeded the General Offering giving goals for the first half of 2024. For the first time in over seven years, our collections have exceeded 50% by midyear. We have received \$370,800 which represents 51% of the projected budget. The support of the Needs Among Us ministry has also been strong, reaching \$27,000 by the end of June.

Our expenses through the first half of the year are higher than previous years, but May and June expenses were within budget. Currently, the expenses are at 49.5% or \$467,400. With many unexpected expenses in the first few months, we are beginning to see the expense budget level off. We have planned some investment withdrawals to cover a portion of the gap between projected offerings and projected expenses. Continued generosity, though, may save us from doing this.

The Session, Trustees, and staff continue to diligently monitor expenses. We are also blessed to have received grants to address special ministries including Vacation Bible School and neurodiversity. Our next upcoming challenge will be funding our boiler replacement. Last winter, our boiler went out. In the next few months, we will be challenged to address this essential \$95,000 expense.

Your continued prayerful support of these ministries is appreciated.

from the Trustees

In addition to routine maintenance, Trustees were involved with:

- Solar project: Electrical work and installation are complete. The fence installation will be completed followed by a final Ameren inspection.
- Conference Room: After the carpet is installed, the room will be complete and ready to use.
- The boiler is not repairable and must be replaced. Bids were considered and recommendations sent to the Session.
- All annual inspections are complete.
- Fallen tree limbs have been removed following the storms.
- Moss and algae have been power washed from our buildings.
- Rainwater seeping into Eversull Hall is being investigated and solutions sought.

We have many gardeners who tend our landscaping in the summer heat! Thank you!

2024

GATHERINGS

The monthly gatherings will continue!! Share a time of fellowship and a fun activity and/or meal immediately after the 10:30 am service on the third Sunday of each month.



AUGUST 8 Book Club

In August, the Book Club will discuss *Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Richardson. 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 September is *Lost Roses* by Martha Hall Kelley.

AUGUST 28

Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you like to crochet or knit or would like to learn, join the fellowship of this exceptional ministry on Wednesday, August 28 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.

June Deacon's Meeting: Deacons Present - 18. Total contacts - 246 (54 calls, 130 cards, 46 visits, and 16 emails & texts).

These Days daily devotional books for July-September 2024 are available at the Chapel entrance and at the reception desk for a donation of \$1.25.

FAMILY NEWS

Our Deepest Sympathy For Karen Mear and family and friends on the death of Karen's aunt, Mary Buesing, who passed away on June 15, 2024 in Peoria, IL.

New Arrivals Parents Taylor & Haley (Thompson) Oberg and grandparents Pete & Karen Thompson welcomed Brody Robert Oberg to their family on June 21.

from the Deacons an interview with... Caroline Wayne

Each month the FUPC Deacons will provide a glimpse into the life of a member included on their Thinking of You List. It will allow readers to become acquainted or reacquainted with Former leaders of the FUPC Family.

What is the secret to your longevity and good health?

I see my life as a gift from God, and I have a limited control of what happens to me. This reduces my stress.

What would be your advice to your younger self?

Don't take yourself too seriously.

What was one of your moments closest to Christ?

I am closest to Christ when I realize how blessed my life is, and I am overcome with joy and thankfulness for it.

Of all God's blessings in your life, what are the three closest to your heart?

The family that God gave me.
The life God gave me.
The ability to study the Bible, to pray, and to receive those "aha" moments when I better understand what God wants me to know and to do.

How has church and your love of God shaped your life?

Church and love of God has made my life more meaningful, richer, and deeper in understanding. It is my goal that my faith informs my values and consequently my decisions and choices in all aspects of life. As a child I admired the faith of my elders as they lived their faith. This helped me grow my faith.

Favorite church hymn:

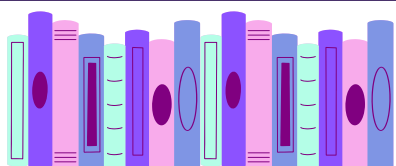
"Here I Am, Lord"

Favorite Bible verse:

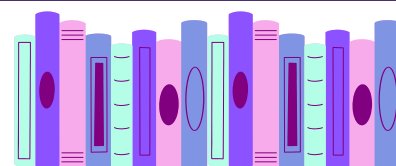
Different verses have impacted my life at different times. II Corinthians 5:5: "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God."



Adult Discipleship



There are numerous learning, connecting, and fellowship opportunities available for adults throughout the month of August.



CONNECT & GATHER

S
U
N
D
A
Y
S

Looking for a casual way to reflect with others about life and faith? Join other adults in the Library from 9:15-10:00 am on Sunday mornings for a time of fellowship and discussion. Come see what questions await in the three mystery boxes!

PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

In August we will continue the six-week series called *Practice Spiritual Disciplines*. God's central invitation to followers of Jesus is to draw near to God in Christ and to allow God, through the Holy Spirit, to transform us into Christ's image. Christian spiritual disciplines and spiritual practices are ways in which we do that. Spiritual disciplines are usually thought of as those things that help us draw near to God and might include different forms of prayer, meditation, study, and service. In August we will be discussing sessions two through five. This class will be hybrid, meeting in-person in the Vista Room or via Zoom at 9:15 am on Sundays. For details and to receive study materials, contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org. Login information for Zoom is included in the eWeekly every Friday.

DURING THE WEEK: 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 information.

COMING THIS FALL

Please join us for Seasons 3 and 4 of *The Chosen*

What? Viewing episodes of Season 3 of *The Chosen*.

When? Wednesday evenings from 5:30 – 7:00 pm beginning September 4

Where? The Blue Room (former pre-school classroom downstairs) Bottled water and popcorn provided. Optional – bring supper in a sack and/or snacks to share. Call Roger Doll, (618) 402-1822 or Brenda Doll, (618) 444-9660.

What is FUPC saying?

"The Chosen makes the life of Jesus truly come to life."

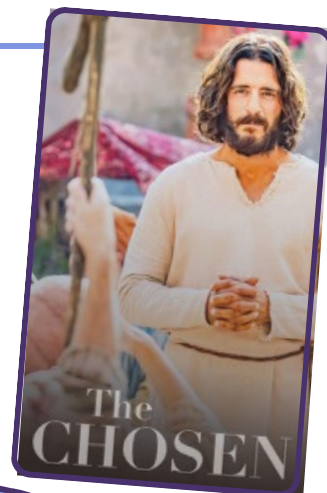
MICKIE MOORE

ALLYSON CALLISON

"The Chosen series has been a wonderful Bible study. The characters are depicted in such a human way that it makes understanding the Bible much easier and more interesting. I have loved being part of this group with our discussions and look forward to continuing."

"The series has certainly given me a different perspective on the life of Jesus. He is portrayed with more humanity and less divinity."

DAN BAINTE



SUMMER SACK LUNCH PROGRAM

We have gone from feeding 125 children every Friday to serving 150! The lunch sacks are filled with nutritious food and messages of hope from our Evangelism Committee. Our Thursday crew efficiently makes the sandwiches and fills the bags every week. We welcome everyone to join us at 6:00 on Thursday evenings.

This is our 10th year collaborating with other community churches to make sure our children are fed every Friday during summer break from school. We are grateful to Jane Alberter and Tina & Rob Thornberry and family for delivering lunches. And thanks to our grocery shoppers, Laura Hall, Norma Mason, and Susy Rybicki.

Thank you to everyone who helps, donates, and prays for the children and their families! We still need individual bags of chips and cookies.

GIVE a
MEAL
a MONTH

In August, we will collect items for Interfaith Food Pantry. The pantry needs staples like sugar, flour, cooking oil, and peanut butter and jelly as well as canned fruit, Rice-a-Roni, and pasta. Cash donations are always welcome and can be dropped off at FUPC marked for Interfaith Food Pantry. Please bring donations to the church by Sunday, August 11. Thank you for your faithful support of those experiencing food insufficiency. Contact Laurie Brown, laurie0811@att.net or Judy Stratton, judy55stratton@gmail.com with questions. Thank you!

from Hospitality

Coffee Hour continues to foster friendships, new and old. A big thanks to Sue & Bill Donaldson and Laura & Mike Rumer as well as the Hospitality Ministry volunteers for hosting in July. When no one signs up, we feature donut holes from Wood Bakery in O'Fallon and random treats from anyone who has a minute and just feels like baking. There are quite a few openings for hosting over the next several months. Please consider signing up with a church group you belong to or just some friends. Thanks!

MobileMarket

Mobile Market will recommence in September so watch for updates and plan to join a super fun group of volunteers on September 18 at 8:00 am.

from Stewardship

Discovering God's Plan

Stewardship requires we discover God's plan for us. To demonstrate this, consider the following passage from Alice in Wonderland:

"Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?
That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.
I don't much care where, said Alice
Then it doesn't matter which way you go, said the Cat."

The Bible describes a dynamic and interesting interaction between God's will and our choices. God is definitely in charge (sovereign), but we have the free will to make decisions and choices. In other words, our freedom is subject to God's control. In Romans 8:28 we learn: "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

If we search the Scriptures, there are some things that become apparent:

"It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because it was his plan long before the world began." 2 Timothy 1:9

"Long ago, even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ." Ephesians 1:4-5

"For we are God's masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus, SO THAT we can do the good things planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10

Therefore, be a servant for righteousness, not a captive to sin. Bear others burdens and restore gentleness in yourself and your community.

The Stewardship Committee

Children & Youth Discipleship

Wednesday Night Ministry for Children and Youth!!

AUGUST: CHILDREN & YOUTH

Every Wednesday during the school year (except during holiday breaks), there is fun, food, and faith for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Each night has games, dinner, and faith discussions for every age. If you would like to sign-up a child or youth for Wednesday nights you can contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org or you can scan the QR code and fill out a digital form.



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Five youth and two adults from FUPC Belleville joined two youth and one adult from FUPC Collinsville for a Group Missions Trip Week of Hope in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Our week consisted of 47 campers from five churches from three states. Each camper was put into a different crew and during the day each camper would go to the work site that their crew had been assigned to. During our week there were nine crews that worked at five different sites. Our daily schedule consisted of wakey wakey at 6:45 am, breakfast, morning program, going to work sites until around 3:00 pm, free time, dinner, evening program, youth group time, and lights out at 11:00 pm. This year's theme was Influencer and the verse was Romans 12:2. We discussed how we are all influenced by the people around us through news, music, work, school, sports, and basically anywhere we direct our attention. Whether we think so or not, everyone is an influencer in some way or another. Despite all the many influences in our lives, the greatest influencer is Jesus. We discussed this theme during program time, during crew devotionals, and during our youth group time. It was an amazing week of service and God sightings!

Sunday Discipleship for ALL Children and Youth

SUNDAYS 9:15-10:00 AM

There are opportunities for all ages to grow in their faith on Sunday morning throughout the entire summer! Safe, interactive childcare will be available in the Toddler Room for children 5 years old and under. Kids in grades Kindergarten through 5th Grade have a time of **Faith & Fun!** This will help younger children to build their basic beliefs and knowledge about God in fun and engaging ways. Sixth through 12th Graders are invited to come eat some waffles and explore the Bible in meaningful ways during **Waffles & the Word**. Contact Rhonda Eugea if you have any questions at reugea@firstunitedpres.org.

Childcare During Worship for 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 for age 3 through grade 3

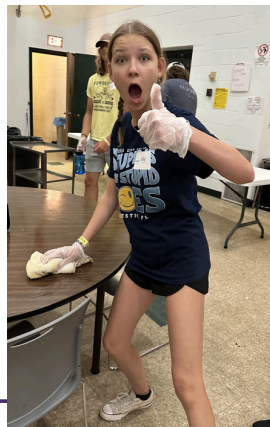
After a special time with the pastors, children are invited to leave with a Worship Leader and Greeters to continue to worship in Children's Chapel. This is a special place where children will hear stories of God's people and respond.

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.

Summer Snapshots

High School Youth Mission Trip

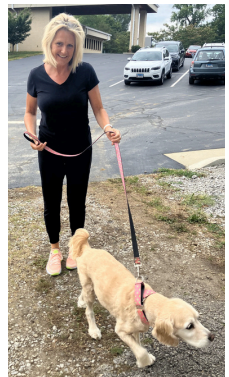
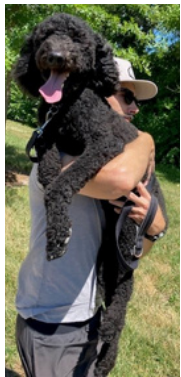
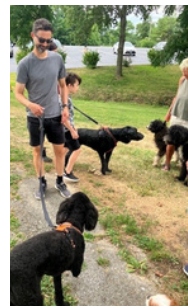


People and Pets!

On Saturday, June 29, FUPC sponsored its second annual Pet Blessing. The weather was wonderful so we were able to gather by the pavilion. Twelve dogs, three cats, and 20 humans joined in song, scripture, and fellowship as we expressed our gratitude for all of God's creation.

Pet supplies that were donated were taken Belleville Area Humane Society. Thank you to everyone who attended. It was a huge success!

Pet Blessing Committee
Pastor Alex & Sue Perez



First Presbyterian Church

On June 25 our FUPC staff attended personnel training day. The hope was to provide a valuable overview of the personnel policies of the church. We will be updating our policies this year and everyone's input was greatly appreciated. After the training, we enjoyed a Thai lunch where we shared dishes "family style."



Staff Leaders

Rev. Rob Dyer, Senior Pastor / Head of Staff

rdyer@firstunitedpres.org

Rev. Alex Lysdahl, Associate Pastor

alysdahl@firstunitedpres.org

Rhonda Eugea,

Director of Christian Discipleship

reugea@firstunitedpres.org

Jami Olsen, Administrative Assistant

office@firstunitedpres.org

Dr. Andy Jensen, Director of Music

ajensen@firstunitedpres.org

Mat Conway, Worship Music Leader

Diana Umali, Pianist / Accompanist

Dale Overstreet, Director of Audio /

Visual Ministries + Custodian

videoministry@firstunitedpres.org

the Steeple

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

theSteeple@firstunitedpres.org

www.firstunitedpres.org

1303 Royal Heights Rd.
Belleville, IL 62223

618-233-0295

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

Sundays

8:00 am Chapel Worship

9:00 am Chancel Choir

9:15 am Sunday School

10:30 am Sanctuary and
Zoom Worship

FIRST UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FIRSTUNITEDPRES.ORG

