

THE STEEPLE



Easter is More!

As we approach Easter, our hearts turn with anticipation to the profound message of this season. It's a time for reflection, renewal, and the celebration of a story that has the power to transform our lives.

Easter is more than just a religious holiday; it's a declaration that something extraordinary has happened. It's a moment in history that changed everything, offering us a new perspective on life, death, and the very nature of our existence.

Think about it: what does it mean to have the courage to trust in the midst of uncertainty? How do we find the strength to move forward, even when fear holds us back? Easter challenges us to confront these questions head-on and to discover the transformative power of faith.

This Easter season let us come together to embrace the newness of life that is offered to us. Let us be inspired to let go of our fears, claim the victory that has been won for us, and go out into the world with renewed purpose to enact grace, justice, and mercy in our everyday lives.

We look forward to celebrating with you as we delve into these powerful themes and experience the joy of Easter this month.

In Christ, Pastor Rich

2024 INVESTMENT REPORT

First United Presbyterian Church is blessed to have nearly \$2 million of invested assets to help support the furtherance of our goals of ministries, active discipleship, faithful service, and nurturing fellowship. Below is an overview of what our assets support and how they are invested.

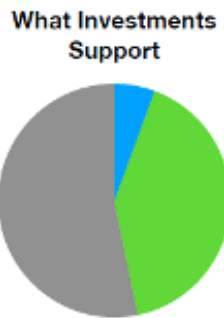
What our assets support

First United has 14 funds to support various goals within the church.

- 6 funds support scholarships (45% of investments)
- 5 funds support the general operation and goals of the church (50% of investments)
- 3 funds support special areas such as bell maintenance and library (5% of investments)

How our assets are invested

At First United we are focused on both generating current year income to support our current cash flow needs and generating growth to support our ongoing goals. Our investments use mutual funds that focus roughly 60% of our assets on generating income and 40% on generating growth.



How Investments Are Used

2024 End of Year Business	
Special Use: 5%	\$ 110,830.96
Scholarships: 45%	\$ 611,851.19
General Ops: 50%	\$ 1,051,892.41
TOTAL	\$ 1,974,574.58

The mutual funds also focus on investing in accordance with the social-witness principles established by the General Assembly of PC-USA, avoiding investment in companies involved in tobacco, alcohol, for-profit prisons, and certain weapons/firearms.

The Board of Trustees along with the Budget Committee will provide continuing guidance to Session to be good stewards of these endowment funds.

Announcements

Scholarships



Scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 school year are **available April 1st**. Applications are **due May 1st**. Email the Church Office, office@firstunitedpres.org for the applications and information.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Christian Education Committee announces that scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year will be available April 1. The following scholarships will be awarded: the Presbyterian and Ray L. Angerer Scholarships to associate, bachelor, or graduate level students; the Paul Cornell scholarship to those pursuing a Christian vocation; and the Louise M. Erwin Scholarship to a graduate level student in a therapy-related discipline with a plan to work with children (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy). Applications for the Professional Church Vocation Fund for those entering ministry-related fields are also available April 1.

To request an application, email Jami Olsen, office@firstunitedpres.org. All completed applications with supporting documents are due May 1.

April 27: Calling All 50-Year Members

Have you been recognized as a 50-Year Member of First United Presbyterian Church? If you joined First Presbyterian of Belleville, First Presbyterian of East St. Louis, or Westminster Presbyterian in 1975, we want to celebrate this important milestone in your spiritual life. A special recognition is planned for Sunday, April 27 during the 10:30 am worship service. Help us make sure no one is missing. Please call the Church Office, (618) 233-0295, to check the list for your name.

United Bells Ringing our Praise!

We meet every Wednesday at 5:45 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! For more information, please call or email Julia Weeks, (618) 531-5002, juliaaweeks@gmail.com.

These Days

These Days daily devotional books for April-June 2025 are available at the Chapel entrance and at the reception desk in Cornell Commons.

from the deacons

February Deacon's Meeting: Deacons Present - 12. Total contacts - 174 (23 calls, 127 cards, 12 visits, and 12 emails & texts).

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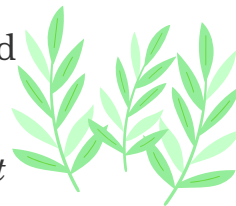
holly week 2025

Palm Sunday, April 13

8:00 am & 10:30 am hybrid

Wednesday, April 16

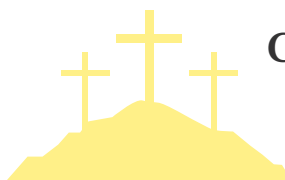
Children & Youth do not meet



Good Friday, April 18

7:00 pm hybrid

The link to Zoom is www.fupcoll.org/services



Easter Egg Hunt, April 19

10:15 am,

hosted by the Sand Dollars fellowship group

~ bring your own basket ~

FREE!

~ rain or shine ~



Easter Sunday, April 20

8:00 am & 10:30 am hybrid

Sunday School classes do not meet



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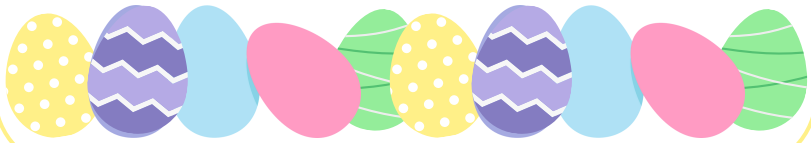
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april 19: easter egg hunt

The Sand Dollars will host an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19 at the church. Gather at 10:15 am with egg hunt starting at 10:30. Admission is free.

This event will be held outdoors rain or shine. In case of rain there will be a drive-through Easter Egg giveaway. There will also be attendance prizes for every child. Children should bring their own baskets. For more information, please contact our Skippers, Brenda & Joe Fedak, (618) 558-7086, or Jan Nevois, (618) 402-7170.



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Veterans' Life Group

Our FUPC Spring Community BBQ is Saturday May 24 from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm in Eversull Hall and the patio. Please put this date on your calendar.

Once again our Greeting Ambassador, Joyce Dyer, will meet with all the visitors while they enjoy the free meal and get to experience our hospitality and warm greeting by all of our church family. Thanks to all of you who help sponsor this event with your attendance and kind donations. Watch for more details in the May issue of the Steeple regarding this popular form of church discipleship.

Blessings to each of you,
Ken & Shawn (314) 791-5371

THE GATHERING

On February 23, FUPC hosted the 2025 Gathering of the Center for Racial Harmony. This event honored 52 Kindergarten through 12th grade students from three Illinois counties who have promoted goodwill and respect and have sought peaceful ways to resolve differences in their schools, homes, and communities. Many families and friends from different races and faiths attended in glorious harmony to honor our youth. It was a great day!

The theme for the 2025 Gathering was 'Courage Creates Community.' While the photo captures the image of the diverse group, the program included the names of the participating schools and described the acts leading to each child's nomination. Congratulations was extended to each student, their families, teachers, principals, school support staff, and other mentors throughout the community. A special thank you to Pastor Dyer and all those who helped plan and staff the church for the recognition and celebration of God's greatest blessing – our children. God bless all those being celebrated, all those who hosted, and all those who helped make the program a success.



Fellowship & Caring Ministries

APRIL 4

Sand Dollars

Fish Fry Friday & Meeting

The Sand Dollars will meet at Danny's Irish Pub on Friday, April 4 between 5:30 & 6:00 pm for dinner and then return to the church for a meeting and to fill eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt. If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact our Skippers, Brenda & Joe Fedak, (618) 558-7086, or Jan Nevois, (618) 402-7170.

FISH FRY FRIDAYS 

APRIL 11 to be determined



APRIL 10

Book Club

In April, the Book Club will discuss *The Life She Was Given* by Ellen Marie Wiseman. 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 May is *Forever Across the Marsh* by Jeff Pearson.

APRIL 11

Merry Mates

Merry Mates will plan to meet on Friday, April 11. Members should watch for an email after April 1 for the specifics. If you are not a member and are interested in joining, please contact Andy or Jean Morgan, (618) 257-1935 for the specifics.

APRIL 23

Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you like to crochet or knit or would like to learn, join the fellowship of this exceptional ministry! Plan to join us on April 23 at 9:30 am in Cornell Commons. Prayer shawls are continually added to the inventory. Be part of this outreach to those celebrating joy or needing comfort. Shawls are in the bookcase in the Narthex. For more information contact Mary Teague, (618) 920-7589.

APRIL 22 Potlucks with a Purpose

Potlucks with a Purpose will be meeting in Eversull Hall on Tuesday, April 22 at 6:30 pm. Please use the Royal Heights Road/Chapel entrance. After sharing our potluck dishes, a representative from HeartLands Conservancy will share information about local natural habitats and the wild areas their organization preserves and protects "in an effort to support people's well-being, healthy ecosystems, and cultural heritage amidst growth and change." Please bring yourself, a friend, and a dish to share and enjoy fellowship and entertainment!

Our next quarterly meetings will be Tuesday, July 22; Tuesday, October 28; and Tuesday, January 27. Suggestions for speakers would be appreciated. Please contact Sue Perez, (618) 514-4203. See you Tuesday, April 22.

from the Deacons an interview with... **Laura & Mike Rumer**

Each month the Deacons will provide a glimpse into the life of one of our newer members. It will allow readers to become better acquainted with the new faces at First United!

Please identify and describe the place you call your hometown.

Richmond, IN which is located off I-70 on the Indiana/Ohio state line. Once a booming industrial town, manufacturing school buses, wire of all types, and piston rings. Home of the largest RV dealership.

Why did you choose First United Presbyterian Church?

We wanted to get back to church and visited several in the area. Our very first visit to FUPC felt like we were among family and friends.

What has been your moment closest to Christ?

The birth of our second daughter who was premature with under-developed organs and spent many weeks in a military hospital in Frankfurt, Germany.

How are church and your love of God shaping your life?

We like to think that it has made us better people; more caring and kinder and always willing to help others.

What are your hobbies/interests that enhance the quality of your life?

Laura enjoys baking, sewing, gardening, being outdoors, and creating craft works. Mike enjoys woodworking, from small projects to furniture and home repairs/remodeling.

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

Our children, our families/friends, and our health.

What makes you smile?

Our families, friends, and sunshine!

What fills your days?

One-day excursions; taking long walks; visiting family in St. Louis, Indiana, and Florida; our hobbies; and volunteering at church.

Adult Discipleship

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

Care for Creation

On April 6 and 13 we will be wrapping up a four-week series from Follow Me curriculum called Care for Creation. Caring for creation offers us a way of following Jesus—the one who taught us that God’s love is more powerful even than death—and we will receive a word of hope as we live out our calling as disciples. The four dimensions of this practice that are discussed include: appreciate God’s creation, till, share the planet, and restore creation. This class is hybrid, meeting on Sundays at 9:15 am in person in the Vista Room or via Zoom. 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. Please note there will not be class on April 20.

Lessons from Thailand

On April 27 come hear Pastor Rob tell stories and what he learned from his latest visit with our mission partners in Thailand. This class will be hybrid, meeting on Sunday, April 27 at 9:15 am in person in the Vista Room or via Zoom. For details, 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 info.

WOMEN'S CIRCLES

FUPC two women's groups meet 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 April 15 at 1:00 pm, Amy Brummitt, (618) 235-4226.
- Lydia Circle will meet April 17 at 1:00 pm, Jan Jensen, (626) 894-6580.

Mobile Market: April 17

Our next Mobile Market is Thursday, April 17. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 8:00 A.M. Once the truck arrives from the St. Louis Area Foodbank, we sort the food and then load it into waiting cars that line up outside the Commons area. Mobile Market is a terrific opportunity to serve the underserved in our community and it only takes a few hours once a month. Join us in this effort! Questions can be directed to Judy Stratton, (618) 978-5485 or Laurie Brown, (618) 520-8112.



KINDERCOTTAGE DONATIONS

The Lydia Circle will once again be collecting individually wrapped candy from March 23 through April 13. Containers will be set up in Cornell Commons and all collected candy will go to Kindercottage in East St. Louis for their Easter baskets.

Contact Susy Rybicki, (618) 792-9458, with any questions.

GIVE a MEAL a MONTH

Give-A-Meal-A-Month for April will be a collection of food for the Community Interfaith Food Pantry. The Pantry is in need of staples such as flour, sugar, cooking oil, peanut butter, jelly, canned foods (vegetables, fruit, chili, tuna, ravioli), and boxed meals, potatoes, and cereal. Please bring food or monetary donations to church by April 13.

Contact Laurie Brown, (618) 620-8112, or Judy Stratton (618) 978-5485 with questions.

Enjoy Gardening?

From April through October, volunteers are needed to weed and water small, easily managed areas. Weekly maintenance is preferable but not necessary. If you are able serve to help keep our church grounds beautiful for all to enjoy, please call Dan Wagner, (618) 978-5684.

from Stewardship

“This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). Yet grief, disruption, today’s divisive political climate, and the absence of civil discourse is ever present. What do we do? How can we reclaim the gladness referenced in Psalm 118?

These feelings are real. They need to be acknowledged. They need to be shared. We are not called to grieve in either silence or in isolation. Instead, we need to drop our shields and together seek honest communal processing and the healing that we are promised through God’s love and the gift of grace. There is much we may never understand, but we have the assurance that truth is immutable, it shall set us free, and sincere faith fortifies us for the journey and its quest.

First be reminded God will never let you go. “God is love, and those that abide in God, and God abides in them” (John 4:16). Next, remember we can ask God for wisdom to see the truth and follow the right path. “If any of you is lacking wisdom, ask God, who gives generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you” (James 1:5). We are called to work together to bring light to darkness, peace to disruption and chaos, and hope to those most vulnerable. “We know all things work together for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

The steps are simple yet difficult: acknowledge our vulnerabilities; open our eyes and see the darkness in the world, seek the truth, pray for wisdom to separate our purpose(s) from God’s purpose for us, remember good comes from love (Agape) which cultivates God’s purpose, hope emerges and prevails when we live in clarity of God’s truth, and the ultimate joy comes from the God who so loved us He sacrificed His “only begotten son” for our salvation and the gift of love everlasting.

In closing may we continue our Lenten journey by living the words of the serenity prayer:

“God grant me the serenity to accept all things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”

God Bless,
-The Stewardship Committee

Children & Youth Discipleship

Wednesday Night Ministry for Children and 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 contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org or you can scan the QR code and fill out a digital form.



Wednesdays for Grades K-5

April 2 & 9: We will be finishing a five-week series called "Surprises." On April 2 we will be discussing "Thomas Wants To See" based on John 20:19-31. On April 9 we will be discussing "Jesus Gives Peter a Job" based on John 21:15-19.

April 16: We will not be meeting this week. Happy Easter!

April 23 & 30: We will begin a new series called "Jesus Teaches." On April 23 we will discuss "A Blessing Map" based on Matthew 5:1-12. On April 30 we will discuss "The Lord's Prayer" based on Luke 11:1-4.

May 7: May 7 will be our last Wednesday of the 2024-2025 school year and will be a night of celebration with fun and food.

Wednesdays for Grades 6th-12th



April 2, 9, 23 & 30: Snow days changed our schedule quite a bit. We will be spending April on a series on the Resurrection called "Invited." There is nothing like throwing a party to celebrate the people you love. In this six-week series, we will see what it is like when we celebrate all that God has done through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

April 16: We will not be meeting this week. Happy Easter!

May 7: May 7 will be our last Wednesday of the 2024-2025 school year and will be a night of celebration with fun and food.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

There are still Wednesday nights open to volunteer to prepare and serve a meal. Talk with your family, friends, or church life group then check your calendars for a Wednesday night that may fit in your schedule. You could always order pizza! Donations are also welcome.

Contact Jess Mokriakow, (618) 910-3738, jmokrakow@gmail.com or Leah Lankford, (618) 696-6576, shawnandleah@yahoo.com for more information.

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. Safe, interactive childcare will be available in the Toddler Room for children 5 years old and under. Kids in grades Kindergarten through 5th have a time of **Faith & Fun!** This will help younger children 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.

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 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.

First United Presbyterian Church

welcome new members!

On Sunday, February 16, we welcomed Tim, Jamie, Addison & J.R. Hauver to our FUPC family.



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April Sundays

April Sundays

April Sundays

Our Deepest Sympathy

FAMILY NEWS

For the family & friends of Virginia Purkel who passed away March 6.

For Tony Held and family & friends upon the death of Tony's wife, Vera Held who passed away March 8 in Waterloo, IL.



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

Kayla Descher, Children and
Youth Support Specialist

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**

FIRST UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FIRSTUNITEDPRES.ORG 

www.firstunitedpres.org 

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office hours
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

Wednesdays

5:45 pm Children & Youth

5:45 pm United Bells

