

THE SPIRE

January 10, 2024



Winnie plays the ukulele
at Christmas Eve

Holy Spirit Activate!

Numbers are important. No doubt all of us are aware of our age—it's not "just a number." We might not want to be aware of it, but our doctor wants to know our weight, and the numbers attached to our blood pressure, and any numbers that might be reported on our most recent blood test. Our banks look at our credit report when loaning us money. Numbers tell us, in tangible ways, how we're doing.

Would you like more numbers? Here are some numbers on the health of our church. Last year, we ended 2023 with an average of 604 persons in worship. This includes both in-person and online worship, and it compares to 534 in the previous year. A deeper dive will tell you that this year benefited by having Christmas Eve on a Sunday but we were up in ways that blow my mind, nonetheless.

As we have for many years now, we met our commitment to The United Methodist Church in giving 100% to apportionments, an amount that this year totaled \$129,750. Our Easter offering came in at \$18,620, and our Christmas offering of \$23,059, which surpasses the record set in 2020 by nearly \$2,500.

To date, we have collected \$1,188,095 toward our "Fast Forward" capital campaign. We are currently sitting on debt of \$393,577 and are projecting that at the end of our capital campaign in 2024, we will have a debt of just \$162,571. For a church whose annual budget is \$1,162,266, this is quite a manageable amount.

We also ended 2023 with 56 new members, grieved the death of 19 members, and celebrated the baptism of 5 persons. The number of new members, in particular, is amazing and should be celebrated with a bunch of high-fives!

And, while it's more antidotal, we are seeing a much longer list of guests (both first-time and returning). Did you know that immediately following Christmas Eve, we did something we've never done before? We taped an individual video welcoming persons and thanking them for their presence. And, while it's early, it seems to have paid off with a much higher percentage of first-time guests returning the last two Sundays!

To what do I credit all this good news that indicates such health among us? Certainly, the Holy Spirit most of all. The Spirit of God is moving among the people of First St. Charles in some absolutely fun and exciting ways. Additionally, our incredible staff's increased and creative efforts at outreach and marketing, that extend both internally and out into our community are clearly making an impact. A focused effort on gathering new people to Christ and focusing on our commitment that "there's room for everyone at the manger," lets ALL know that First St. Charles is a place that puts St. Charles first and continues to be a place where everyone is safe, welcome and wanted.

Thank you for being part of some really special Christmas magic this year.

Bart



this is SAINT CHARLES

Charming. Historic. Home. St. Charles is a special place to live, work, and worship. But, for many of our neighbors, this can be a difficult place to call home. With rising costs of living and an affordable housing crisis, more and more people in our community are falling through the cracks. With this year's Christmas offering, our church is answering the call with ministries that meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable.



little Food Pantry

In its first year of operation, the Little Food Pantry outside our 8th street doors has provided hundreds of pounds of food to our neighbors in need. It's a way that we can ensure that no one in our neighborhood goes hungry for even one night.



lincoln Elementary

Our partnership with Lincoln Elementary helps provide resources and support to one of the poorest schools in St. Charles City. Since our partnership began, Lincoln has been named a a National Blue Ribbon School.



Community Cave

Each month, we offer utility assistance and gasoline cards to people in St. Charles Country who are facing hardship. In October alone, we provided over \$2300 in utility and gas assistance. These funds are a lifeline that help keep the lights and heat on for families in need.

*With your Christmas gift,
you'll be putting St. Charles first!*



worship WITH US



**In-Person Services at
9 a.m. & 11 a.m.**

**Live Stream via
Facebook or YouTube
at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.**

**On Demand via our website:
firststcharlesumc.org**

CONNECT ON THE GO

WITH OUR NEW PODCAST!

Catch up on sermons in the car, or share them with a friend across the country! Our new sermon podcast is now available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify. Find it by searching "First St. Charles" in your podcast app.



Apple Podcasts
(iOS)



Google Podcasts
(Android)



Spotify
(Android & iOS)

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



[@firststcharlesumc.org](https://www.instagram.com/firststcharlesumc)

Meet the Staff

Rev. Bart Hildreth, Ph.D.

Rev. Debby Bartley

Rev. Kate Hanch, Ph.D.

Rev. Keith Janis

Patti Adams

Karla Curry

Stacey Davis

Eric Heien

Marsha Hunt

Kerri Johnson

Beth Kelley

Jack McCormick

Jim Nichols

Olivia Osterhage

Katie Roam

Steve Williams

FIRST *friends*



Olivia Osterhage

**If you're interested in being interviewed,
reach out to Olivia!**



SAVE THE DATE

**Informational Meeting for those wanting
to volunteer at Showers of Blessing**

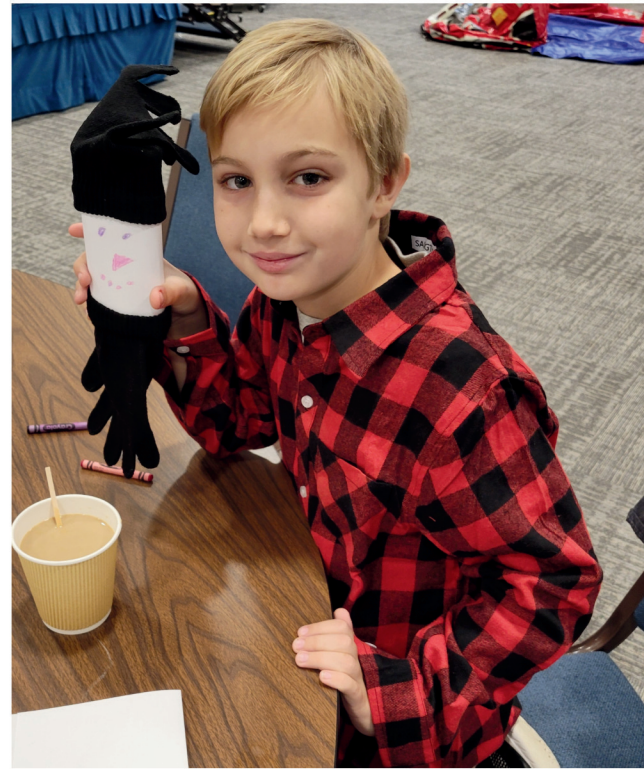
**Sunday, January 28th @ 12 p.m.
Lunch provided**

YOUTH & FAMILY



Our Funday School families made candy snow-people for our Showers of Blessing friends. They covered boxes of candy and topped them with gloves for the winter season.

Families & friends welcome!
Multi-purpose room Sundays at 10 a.m.



Save the Date

MARCH 1ST & 2ND

LOCK-IN

@ CHURCH OF THE SHEPHERD

CONTACT PASTOR KATE TO REGISTER!



MINI MISSION TRIP JANUARY 20TH AT 12 PM

LifeWise StL
Life Skills for Better Futures

† **FIRST ST. CHARLES**
United Methodist Church

Our youth group is
taking a one-day
mission trip to serve at
LifeWise and deliver
the collections from
our Angel Tree this
Christmas.

MANY thanks for your
generosity!





The Preschool & Pre-Kindergarteners performed their Christmas Concert and we're SO proud of them! They had been practicing since October!



OUR MUSIC MINISTER, REV. STEVE WILLIAMS, CONDUCTED A BEAUTIFUL
CHRISTMAS CANTATA, ENTITLED, AN APPALACHIAN WINTER.
THANK YOU, CHANCEL CHOIR FOR SHARING YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS
WITH US!





Our family-friendly Christmas Eve service was led by youth & their families as we told the story of the birth of Jesus.

We sang Silent Night by candlelight



The Kelley family as Mary, Joseph & baby Jesus



Sophia as an angel



We shared in communion together

**We had a MUSIC-
filled Christmas
this year!**



**A group of our choir members
and friends sang carols at
Fairwinds - River's Edge**



**Some of our brass playing
members blessed us with
Christmas carols in the atrium**

**AND our Funday
School kiddos sang
carols during the
Sunday school hour.**



YOUTH & FAMILY

Cocoa & Canvas

JANUARY 19TH
AT 6:30PM

AGES 5+ ARE INVITED TO PAINT A
WINTER SCENE WITH AN
INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

WE WILL PROVIDE THE PAINTING
MATERIALS!

DONATE

DIAPER
DRIVE

Turning
Point

Bring any size or brand of diapers or wipes
& be entered to win prizes! Donations will
benefit **Turning Point**, a non-profit that
provides shelter, safety and support, for
survivors of violence and abuse.

STILL
AVAILABLE

PECANS!

Pieces & halves available
\$12/bag

Available in the church office



GROW

Learn more about Christ and
how to live a grace-filled life



TINY TOT TIME

JANUARY 14TH AT 4 P.M.

FIRST KIDS LEARNING CENTER GYM

A small group for families
with young kiddos to share
fellowship and fun!

NO need to rsvp -
come as you are!



WALKING GROUP

Thursday, January

11th & 25th

JOIN US FOR FITNESS & FUN!

**AND - WE STOP FOR COFFEE &
SNACKS AFTERWARDS!**

**EMAIL OLIVIA IF YOU'RE INTERESTED
IN JOINING US -**

OOSTERHAGE@FIRSTSTCHARLESUMC.ORG

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES



Exploring the Bible

**Monday nights from 6:30-8:00pm
Beginning January 8th**

Open to anyone 18+ who wants to learn more about the Bible and has the desire to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

FIRST ST. CHARLES UMC

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

**Wednesday, January 24th
8:30am-12:30pm in the atrium**



All donors will be entered to win a trip to Superbowl LVIII In Las Vegas!

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES

Caregiver Support Group



Third Tuesday of the month 6:30-7:30 pm in room 301
For more information, contact Nicki Reynolds: nreynolds6@charter.net

Are you NEW to
First St. Charles?

OR

Are you looking to
connect with other
members & guests?



Join our **Welcome Team!** It's the BEST way to meet
members & guests on Sunday mornings!
For more info, contact **Olivia Osterhage:**
oosterhage@firststcharlesumc.org

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES

Showers of Blessing **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Because of your generosity during the Easter Offering, our Showers of Blessing ministry will be expanding to Monday mornings in December!

That means we need more help!

Greeter/Shower Host
Kitchen Help
Clothing Room Attendant
Laundry Attendant
Provide a Meal

To learn more, email
mhunt@firststcharlesumc.org



GO

Share God's grace and love
with others

DONATE YOUR ITEMS TO THE BINS IN THE ATRIUM!

FISH PANTRY

ITEMS NEEDED:

SPAGHETTI (DRY), TOILET TISSUE, TUNA
HELPER, CANNED CHILI, BROTH/GRAVY, BODY
WASH, CANNED CHICKEN, CANNED MEATS
(SPAM, STEW), KLEENEX, JELLO, PIE FILLING



Little Food Pantry

ITEMS NEEDED:

mac n cheese cups - fruit cups - tuna packs -
individual peanut butter cups - ritz crackers - chili -
canned pasta (spaghetti o's/ravioli) - granola bars -
pudding cups - oatmeal packages - peanut butter
crackers



All canned items need to have pull-tab tops

DONATE YOUR ITEMS TO THE BINS IN THE ATRIUM!

SHOWERS OF BLESSING

DONATIONS NEEDED

Men's clothing: medium & large boxer briefs, 32 & 34 waist jeans, M/L/XL t-shirts, socks & tennis shoes.

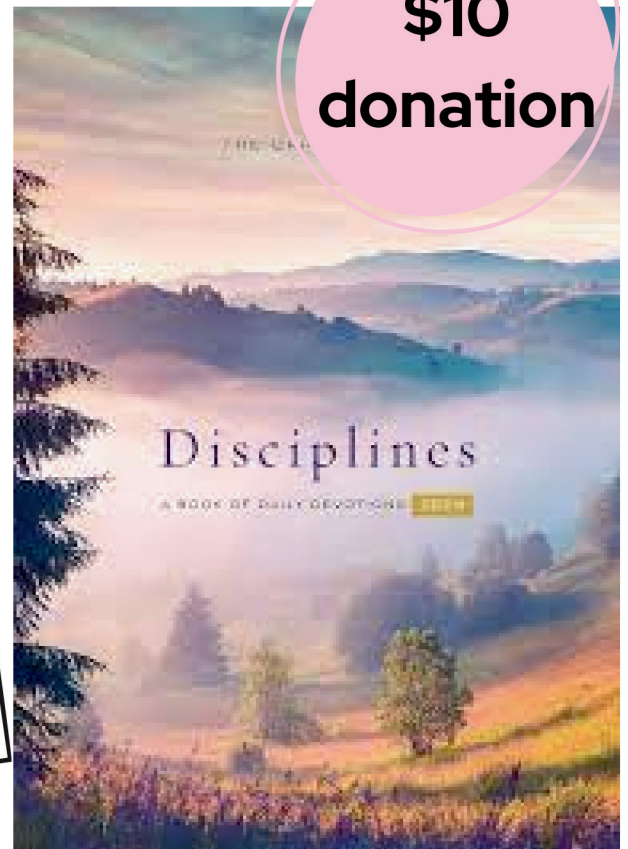
Women's clothing: underwear & tennis shoes.



**2024 Upper Room
Devotionals
Available
in Church Office!**














**available in
large print only**

**\$10
donation**



January

February

			10 <i>thursday</i>	11 <i>friday</i>	12 <i>saturday</i>	13
			SPIRE	 walking group	 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
<i>sunday</i> 14	<i>monday</i> 15	<i>tuesday</i> 16	<i>wednesday</i> 17	<i>thursday</i> 18	<i>friday</i> 19	<i>saturday</i> 20
TINY TOT TIME 	 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	COMMUNITY CARE CAREGIVERS SUPPORT 			COCOA & CANVAS 	
<i>sunday</i> 21	<i>monday</i> 22	<i>tuesday</i> 23	<i>wednesday</i> 24	<i>thursday</i> 25	<i>friday</i> 26	<i>saturday</i> 27
			SPIRE 	 walking group	 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
<i>sunday</i> 28	<i>monday</i> 29	<i>tuesday</i> 30	<i>wednesday</i> 31	<i>thursday</i> 1	<i>friday</i> 2	<i>saturday</i> 3
					 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
<i>sunday</i> 4	<i>monday</i> 5	<i>tuesday</i> 6	<i>wednesday</i> 7	<i>thursday</i> 8	<i>friday</i> 9	<i>saturday</i> 10
February				 walking group	 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	



HAPPY
New Year