FIRST ST. CHARLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH // ISSUE 20 // VOLUME 55

THE SPIRE

NOVEMBER 11, 2026



"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

-Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)

The Gift of Small-Kid Silliness

My daughter texted the family chat recently, “Carter’s class is reading The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig this week.” If you are not familiar with the book, it is a reverse of the classic fairy tale of the Three Little Pigs, featuring three little wolves who build houses and a big bad pig who tries to destroy them.

That simple text from my daughter sparked a memory that had us giggling. When our kids were small The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig seemed to be their favorite story book. Every night they would ask for John or me to read it. One night I read it twice. The next night I tried to convince them to choose a different story, but no, “Read the Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig!”

I said, “If I read it, I'm going to read the whole book backwards!” And I did. Big Bad Pig became Pig Bad Big. Oh, the laughter. Such silliness. I love that our kids remember that and, I especially love that the giggles return. It is stories like this that get told around our holiday tables. How do we get back to that Small Kid-Silliness?

For kids the holidays aren't about spotless dining rooms, perfectly timed meals, or matching outfits. They are about giggling under the dining table, wearing wrapping paper bows as hats, and turning a cardboard box into a castle. Those silly, unscripted moments are the ones we talk about years later. Nobody remembers if the mashed potatoes were cold, but everybody remembers the time someone laughed so hard milk came out of their nose.

As we head into this holiday season, it is easy to let stress steal that joy. Between travel plans, crowded kitchens, and differing opinions around the table, our patience can wear thin fast. We spend hours planning the menu and the schedule, yet we rarely plan how we are going to treat one another. Scripture reminds us to "clothe ourselves" with kindness and patience. Just like we pick out what to wear before a family gathering, we can choose our attitude before we ever walk through the door. When we intentionally plan ahead to be kind, we make room for grace when plans go sideways. We create an atmosphere where people feel safe, loved, and free to laugh again.

This holiday let's bring back a little bit of that small-kid silliness. Let's look at the people around our table with gratitude for who they are right now, not just who we wish they would be. When tension rises, choose a smile. When things go wrong, choose to laugh. A cheerful heart really is the best medicine you can bring to a holiday gathering.

Blessings always in Christ, And Happy Thanksgiving Planning!

Pastor Kim

First Kids Fall Fun!







All-Youth Lock-In & Confirmation Kick-Off: Escape Rooms, Epic Games, and Big Questions!

Clear your calendars for an unforgettable overnight adventure: our annual Youth Lock-In is back, and all students in 6th through 12th grade are invited! We are thrilled to share that our friends from Church of the Shepherd will be joining us for a full night of shared fellowship, games, and community.

Whether your student is a regular at Sunday youth group, stepping into confirmation for the first time, or looking for a welcoming space to hang out with friends, this night is built for them. We are taking over the youth wing and sanctuary from **Friday, November 20 at 7:00 PM to Saturday, November 21 at 9:00 AM:**

• The Living Sanctuary Escape Room: Teams work together to beat the clock, decoding ancient manuscripts, cracking secret ciphers, and unearthing the true, diverse trailblazers of church history—from Galilean fishermen and African desert scholars to early circuit riders and modern civil rights heroes.

• The "Character of God" Flashlight Scavenger Hunt: Grab your flashlights for an interactive, building-wide mystery hunt where teams search hidden corners to track down clues revealing the many qualities and character of God—from unconditional love and fierce justice to boundless creativity and gentle comfort.

• Giant Games & Late-Night Hangouts: High-energy group mixers with Church of the Shepherd, late-night pizza, music, board games, and quiet chill zones to recharge.

Stepping Into Confirmation (Ages 11–14)

While the lock-in is open to all middle and high schoolers, the night also serves as the launchpad for our 2026–2027 Confirmation Cohort (youth ages 11–14 / 6th–8th grade).

Confirmation in our open and affirming church isn't about memorizing rigid checklists or taking tests. It is an experiential journey where young people explore who God is, wrestle with big questions, discover their unique gifts, and decide how they want to make an impact in the world. Attending the lock-in is a great way for prospective confirmands to test the waters, connect with peer leaders and mentors, and experience our community firsthand.

Three Ways to Take Part

• Register for the Lock-In (All 6th–12th Graders): Lock in your spot for the overnight by signing up on our Youth Lock-In Registration Page by **Wednesday, November 18.** Friends from outside the church are always welcome!

• Join the Confirmation Cohort (Ages 11–14): Ready to begin the confirmation milestone journey this year? Enroll your student using our Confirmation Cohort Sign-Up Form to receive the full schedule, retreat dates, and mentor details.

• Fuel the Fun (Food & Snack Donations): Keeping two youth groups energized overnight takes a village! We are collecting frozen pizzas, chips, fresh fruit, breakfast casseroles, juices, and morning bagels. Choose an item on our Lock-In Food & Snack Donation Board—items can be dropped off in the church kitchen by Friday afternoon, November 20.

Questions about confirmation, lock-in logistics, or volunteering as an adult chaperone? Reach out to Ellie Stahr or our youth ministry team anytime!

LOCK-IN SIGN UP

CONFIRMATION REGISTRATION

FOOD FOR LOCK-IN

Youth & Families in Action:
Serving Thanksgiving with Showers of Blessing!

This Thanksgiving, our youth and families are putting faith into action by preparing and serving a full holiday feast for our unhoused neighbors and community guests through Showers of Blessing on **Wednesday, November 25.**

Thanksgiving is all about hospitality, dignity, and radical welcome at the table. Rather than just dropping off cans, our students and families will be in the kitchen together mashing potatoes, carving turkey, plating warm meals, and sitting down to share fellowship with our Guests. Whether your family loves to cook, serve, or simply share a conversation, we would love to have you serve alongside us!

Schedule for Wednesday, November 25:

• Kitchen Prep & Cooking (Starts at 8:00 AM): Chopping vegetables, roasting turkeys, preparing stuffing and green bean casseroles, and warming rolls in the church kitchen.

• Meal Service & Table Fellowship (Starts at 11:00 AM): Plating warm holiday meals, serving drinks, welcoming guests, and sharing lunchtime community at Showers of Blessing.

• Wrap-Up & Clean-Up (12:30 PM–1:30 PM): Packing up leftovers, washing dishes, and resetting the kitchen space.

Two Ways to Support the Feast:

• Sign Up to Volunteer: Youth, parents, and family members can register for morning prep, meal serving, or clean-up shifts on our Showers of Blessing Volunteer Sign-Up Page.

• Donate Food & Supplies: Help us build the menu! We are gathering turkeys, hams, stuffing mix, potatoes, canned cranberries, fresh pies, butter, and aluminum roasting pans. Pick an item to bring on our Thanksgiving Food Donation Board. Food donations can be dropped off in the church kitchen by **Tuesday, November 24 at 5:00 PM!**





BEL CANTO

In Concert

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH AT 7PM

Bel Canto Women's Ensemble is an all-volunteer women's choir, united by their love of making music along with their love of friendship and the power of women's voices. Their purpose is to create a welcoming and creative space that makes music accessible to all women and where every voice is valued. This excellent ensemble can be identified not only by the exceptional performances they present, but also by their black dresses and red shoes.

Their music and their shoes will be on display on **Friday, November 20, at First St. Charles UMC!** The concert is free, and will begin at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.

Mark your calendars and get ready to experience an evening of musical excellence!

YOUTH & CHILDREN

Backpack Program

Current Wishlist



- Creamy Peanut Butter (15-16oz, no larger)
- Fruit Cups
- Individually wrapped cookies, crackers & chips
- Oatmeal
- Canned Chicken

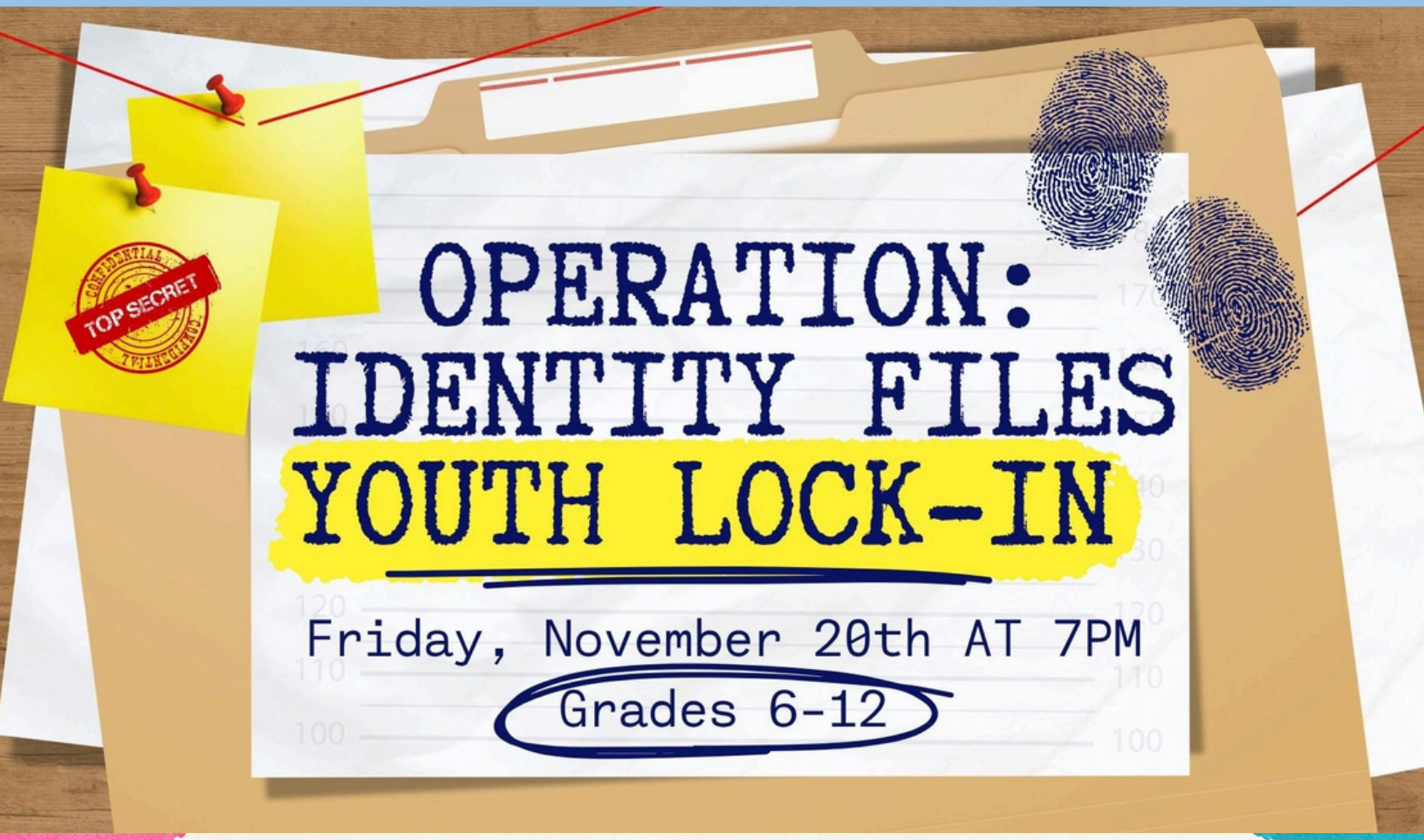
Children's Sunday School



Sundays at 9am
Check in at the First Kids desk!



Kindergarten-5th grade
upstairs in the gym



Re-Imagined CONFIRMATION

JOIN US FOR A JOURNEY EXPLORING CHRISTIAN FAITH AND METHODIST HISTORY



We will learn through hands-on adventures, friendships, prayer, and service.
Bring your questions.
Discover your faith story!

OUR MODEL

Instead of weekly Sunday School, we will have four intentionally designed and fun events!

- Stop #1: Discover your roots
- Stop #2: Explore with curiosity
- Stop #3: Find your rhythm
- Stop #4: Living/celebrating faith

AGES 11-14

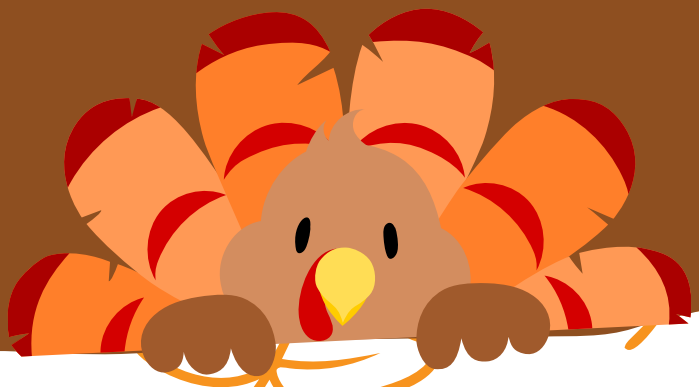
For questions, contact Ellie Stahr
estahr@firststcharlesumc.org

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

6TH-12TH GRADE

SUNDAYS AT 9AM DOWNSTAIRS IN THE BLUE YOUTH ROOM

YOUTH GROUP IS CANCELLED on November 29th!



YOUTH

YOUTH

thanksgiving lunch

Our youth will prepare and serve a thanksgiving meal
for our Showers of Blessing Ministry

Contact Ellie Stahr for more information!

Volunteers

NOV 25TH
8:00 AM

Food Donations

NURSERY

APPLY NOW

We're Hiring!

Nursery Caregiver

- Sunday mornings 8:45am-11am
- Curriculum Provided
- Starting at $15/per hour



Send your resume to contact@firststcharlesumc.org to apply!

JINGLE JAM BAKE-OFF

Enter your prized holiday cookie at our Jingle Jam event on 12/12 and the community will vote on their favorite cookie!

TO ENTER:

- Drop off 3 dozen of your most famous holiday cookies on 12/10 (8am - 3pm)
- Provide your cookie recipe to **mhunt@firststcharlesumc.org** by 12/7 so our guests can share your recipes with their family!

The winning recipe will be published in the 12/16 Spire, win a gift card to Grandma's Cookies and most importantly, earn bragging rights!

ADVENT

Decorating

All are welcome to help decorate the church for Advent on **November 22nd at 11am.** Lunch will be provided!


Take a
Jingle Break
When:
Saturday,
December 5th
Where:
First St. Charles
United Methodist
Church
Time:
10am - 2pm


JOIN US FOR
Jingle Jam
DECEMBER 12TH
3-5PM
PHOTOS WITH SANTA - FACE PAINTING - BOUNCE HOUSE - COOKIES

ADVENT


NIGHT OF
Hope
NIGHT OF
Grace
A LESSONS AND
CAROLS CELEBRATION
DECEMBER 13TH


Blue
Christmas
a service of remembrance and hope
December 20th at 4 pm

On Sunday, November 1st, we celebrated All Saint's Day. In the United Methodist Church, we regard all Christians who have died as saints.

We celebrate the lives of these members who passed away this year.

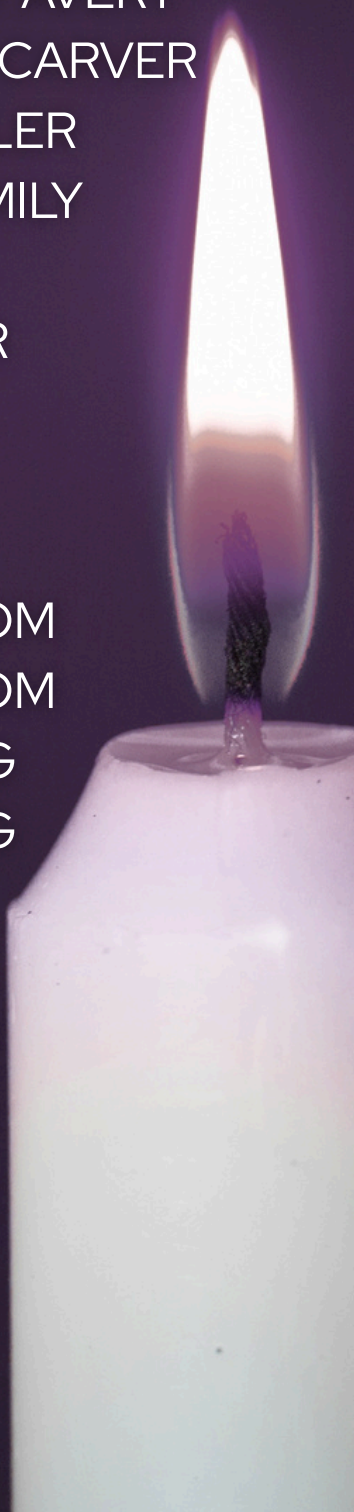
Mergie Adams
Ashley Powell
Alice Vlassos
June Gilbert
Marge Oney
Bill Rzepka
Jerry Jones
Susan Bullock
Lee Wehmeier
Bob Caldwell
Evelyn Wall
Sue Gregg
Robert Porter
LoReta Davis
Doris Czeschin
Haven Gregg

We celebrate the lives of these people who were remembered on All Saint's Day.

PERSON MEMORIALIZED :	MEMORIALIZED BY:
IMOGENE & NORMAN CRAIG	GAYLE HORN
DIXIE NORMAN	GAYLE HORN
LEROY LUCAS	EMILY LUCAS
JERRY VAN WYK	EMILY LUCAS
MIKE ANDERSON	EMILY LUCAS
JOE LUCAS	EMILY LUCAS
TERRY KOEBRICH	ANNA REIK
MARY KOEBRICH	ANNA REIK
JOHN CROSS	LU CROSS



PERSON MEMORIALIZED :	MEMORIALIZED BY:
JC GONGAWARE	NANCY & JASON GONGAWARE
HAROLD ALINDER	LLOYD & BONNIE ALINDER
ELVERA ALINDER	LLOYD & BONNIE ALINDER
OSCAR STFFENS	LLOYD & BONNIE ALINDER
JUNE STEFFENS	LLOYD & BONNIE ALINDER
BOB AVERY	MATT, JULIA & KATHY AVERY
BOB & BLANCHE AVERY	MATT, JULIA & KATHY AVERY
CHESTER HANSON	KIM, WINNIE & MIKEY CARVER
GABBY HAENSSLER	MONA LOU HAENSSLER
SUZANNE GROTHE	ALAN GROTHE & FAMILY
JOE & KITTY MENEFEE	MIKE MENEFEE
MERGIE ADAMS	JULIE ADAMS HUBER
BOB ROGERS	DIANA ROGERS
JANET LASHLEY	DIANA ROGERS
ANITA & FRANK HOCKETT	THEIR CHILDREN
OMER RANSON	JAN RANSOM BALCOM
DAVE RANSOM	JAN RANSOM BALCOM
KELLY LONG	LEON & JENNE LONG
MIKE SNIDER	LEON & JENNE LONG
ASHLEY POWELL	FIRST KIDS STAFF
HAROLD & JOE OVERSTREET	RUTH OVERSTREET
BILL SIMON	CAROL JUNE SIMON
CELIA TILLEY	JANE GRAYSON
STEVE BOGAR	FRAN BOGAR
JOE KINCAID	FRAN BOGAR
SHAWN WOODS	JAMES, CHRIS
JOHN BOOKER	PEGGY & FAMILY



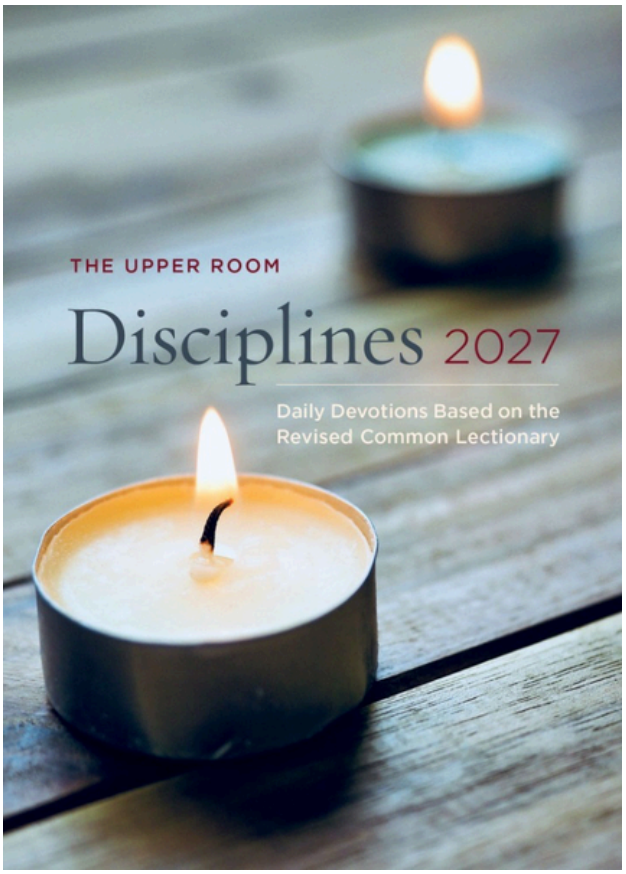
PERSON MEMORIALIZED :	MEMORIALIZED BY:
KATIE NIEDERBERGER	MARGARET ANN NIEDERBERGER
MARGARET CHRIST	MARGARET ANN NIEDERBERGER
PHILIP CHRIST	MARGARET ANN NIEDERBERGER
MERGIE ADAMS	JULIE ADAMS HUBER
BILL HULL	DAN & SHARON O'DONNELL
EVELYN WALL	DAN & SHARON O'DONNELL
MERGIE ADAMS	DAN & SHARON O'DONNELL
CLIFF WALL	DAN & SHARON O'DONNELL
SHARON BYERS	DAN & SHARON O'DONNELL
HELEN & MERLIN SMITH	DONNA & RAY CARLSON
PAUL & FRANCES CARLSON	RAY & DONNA CARLSON
JAYCE & HENRY EDWARDS	RAY & DONNA CARLSON
MAXINE & HAROLD HUSTER	RAY & DONNA CARLSON
DEAN & PAT SMITH	MARDI & TED HOUSE
LINDA JOANN LUND	STEPHANIE HERNDON
ROBERT ALLEN MATHENY	STEPHANIE HERNDON
REV. FRED & IRENE LUMAN	DOROTHY THOMPSON
DANA RUSE HOLLGRAEWE	DOROTHY THOMPSON
RICHARD THOMPSON	DOROTHY THOMPSON
ALLISON LeVASSEUR	THE DeKOSTER'S
JANET & WARD DeKOSTER	THE DeKOSTER'S
HEATHER FULLER	THE DeKOSTER'S
RICH & PEGGY	NICKI REYNOLDS
NORMA KOETTER	NICKI REYNOLDS
FRED HUNT	MARSHA HUNT
KIRBI HUNT	MARSHA HUNT
SUSAN ALVORD	MARSHA HUNT



PERSON MEMORIALIZED :	MEMORIALIZED BY:
TYLER COLLINS	SERENA & TRYSTIN ENGLISH
KARIN DANIELS	SERENA & TRYSTIN ENGLISH
CRAIG SNARZYK	ROBERT SNARZYK
EUGENE & MELBA ACKMANN	DEBBIE POHLMANN & FAMILY
LELAND & LA WEHMEYER	DEBBIE POHLMANN & FAMILY
EVELYN FERRELL	DEBBIE POHLMANN & FAMILY
JOESEPH & EDNA POHLMANN	DEBBIE POHLMANN
EARL CULLOM	DULCIE COUILLARD
DON & MARGARET GOINS	DULCIE COUILLARD
BERNELL & RUTH BICKMEYER	SCOTT & BARB MAGREW
NEAL & MARGE MAGREW	SCOTT & BARB MAGREW
DEAN SPAULDING	DONNA SPAULDING
DOUG SPAULDING	DONNA SPAULDING
ANN BUELOW	DONNA SPAULDING
JERRY VARKER	JIM & JANE HARRER
BARB VARKER	JIM & JANE HARRER
BILL MYRACLE	MARY MYRACLE
WILMA MYRACLE	MARY MYRACLE
JIM COUILLARD	DULCIE & FAMILY
LONNIE WHITEHEAD	TONEY FINDLEY
MONTE FINDLEY	TONEY FINDLEY
DAVID FINDLEY	TONEY FINDLEY
JOE PATRICO	TONEY FINDLEY
JERRY JONES	TONEY FINDLEY
ALBERT & HARRIET McCAFFREY	LYNN RATERMANN
ARTHUR & CAROLYN HOWELL	LYNN RATERMANN
KELLY SULLIVAN	LYNN RATERMANN



SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES



Order your 2027 *Disciplines* now!

This book includes 365 daily devotions designed to help readers become rooted in the teachings of God through meditations and scripture reading. Daily readings include a selected script a mediation on the scripture, and a prayer or suggestion for reflection. Each week has 7 devotions focusing on a particular theme that show how the ancient stories of the Bible relate to our lives today.

Available in regular print for $12 or large print for $14. To order, email **kroam@firststcharlesumc.org** by **December 1.**

55+

Thanksgiving Potluck

November 17th at 11:30 am

We will provide the main turkey and ham, and we invite you to bring your favorite side dish, appetizer, or dessert to share.

RSVP to Marsha Hunt: mhunt@firststcharlesumc.org

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES

FISH PANTRY

ITEMS NEEDED:

PIE FILLING, MIXED/MISC VEGETABLES, JELLY, TOMATO SOUP, TOMATO SAUCE, PASTA SIDES, HAMBURGER HELPER/TUNA HELPER, MISC POTATOES (BOXED SCALLOPED, AU GRATIN ETC), PANCAKE SYRUP, WOMEN'S DEODORANT



Little Food Pantry

These are the most popular items for our pantry that serves our community –



tuna packets



granola bars



chili with beans



baked beans



fruit cups

You can drop food donations in the black bin in the atrium!

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES

Caregiver Support Group

Third Tuesday of the month
3 pm in room 300

QUESTIONS? CONTACT NICKI REYNOLDS:
NREYNOLDS6@CHARTER.NET



JOIN OUR WELCOME TEAM! IT'S THE BEST WAY TO MEET MEMBERS & GUESTS ON SUNDAY MORNINGS!

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, CONTACT OLIVIA!

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES



LGBTQ+ SMALL GROUP

BRING YOUR OWN DINNER AND
ENJOY A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP!

THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

CATHERINE COLLIER ROOM

@ FIRST ST. CHARLES

6:00 PM

Showers of Blessing

NOVEMBER

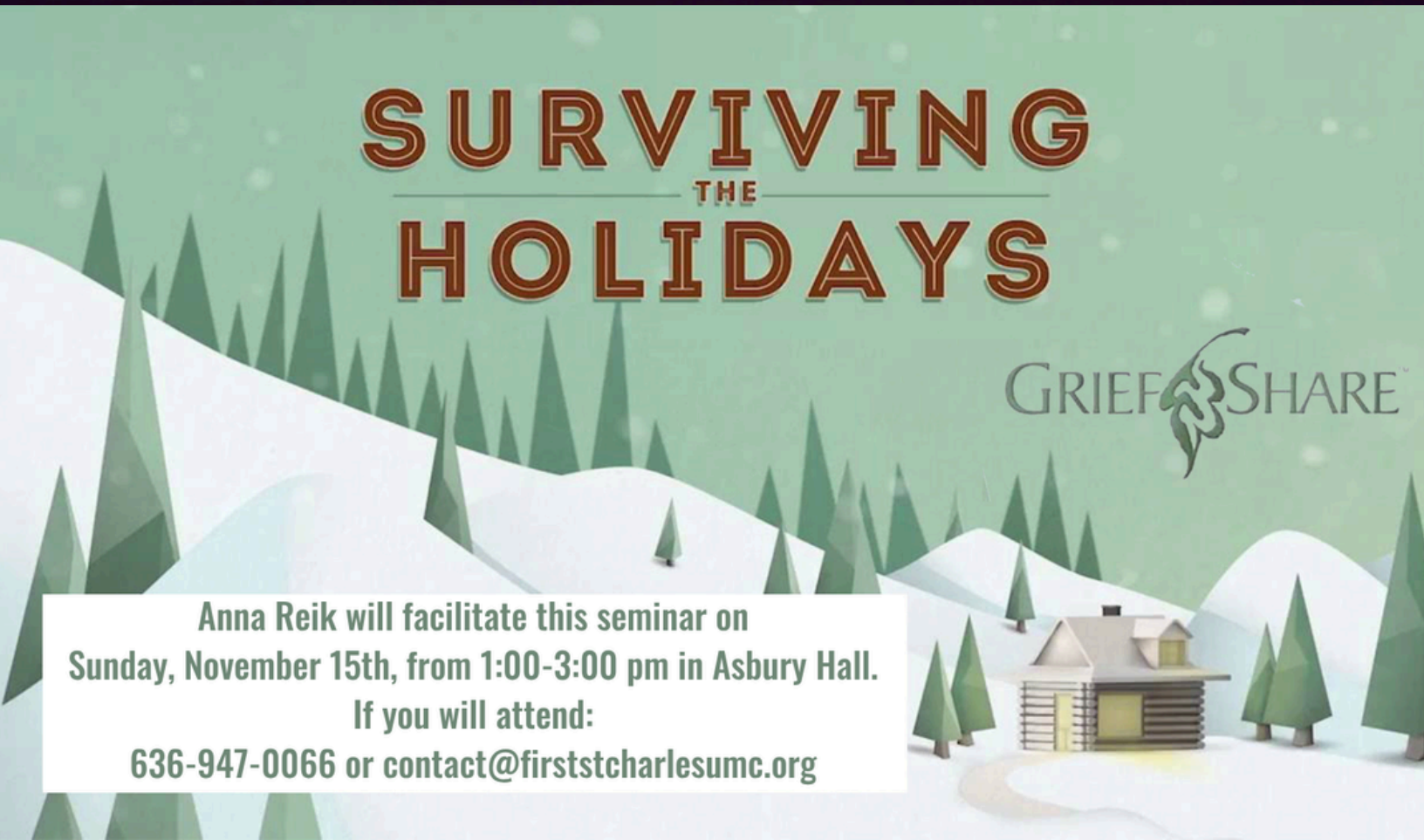


SHOWERS
VOLUNTEER SIGN UP

- Hot Hands
- Rain Ponchos
- Disposable razors
- Hoodies
- Men's jeans (sizes 30-34)
- Gloves

SMALL GROUPS & MINISTRIES





2026 Leadership Board



Kathy Avery



Donna Baeten



Rick Bahr



Tyler Brown



Margaret Harper



John McClure
Chair



Michael Monahan



Greg DeKoster
Finance Chair



Tim Mosher
Lay Leader Liason



Jarred Ray
Trustee Chair



Carissa Sanders

If you have thoughtful inquiries or concerns, you may reach out to the Leadership Board in confidence at:

ContactLeadership@firststcharlesumc.org

NOVEMBER events

15 sun	**SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS** A serminar on navigating grief during the holiday season and finding hope for the future
15 sun	**COMMUNITY CARE** Third Tuesday of the month 8-10 am
17 tues	**55+ Thanksgiving Potluck** Third Tuesday of the month at 11:30 am
17 tues	**LGBTQ+ SMALL GROUP** Third Tuesday of the month at 6 pm
17 tues	**CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP** Third Tuesday of the month at 3 pm
20 fri	**YOUTH LOCK IN** 6th-12th graders are invited to join us for a lock-in at 7 pm
20 fri	**BEL CANTO CONCERT** A free women's chorale concert at 7 pm
22 sun	**ADVENT DECORATING** We will decorate the church for Advent at 11 am
25 wed	**YOUTH THANKSGIVING LUNCH** Our youth will prepare and serve a thanksgiving meal for our Showers of Blessing Ministry
5 sat	**TAKE A JINGLE BREAK** Parents can drop off their children for a fun-filled Saturday