



The Steeple

A Publication of St. Paul United Methodist Church
of Rosewood Heights, Illinois



DECEMBER 2017

"But if we wait expectantly for things we have never seen, then we hope with true perseverance and eager anticipation. A similar thing happens when we pray. We are weak and do not know how to pray, so the Spirit steps in and articulates prayers for us with groaning too profound for words. Don't you know that He who pursues and explores the human heart intimately knows the Spirit's mind because He pleads to God for His saints to align their lives with the will of God? We are confident that God is able to orchestrate everything to work toward something good and beautiful when we love Him and accept His invitation to live according to His plan."

Romans 8 25-28 (The Voice)

If someone had walked into our sanctuary during the prayer time on Sunday, November 19 and seen everyone in clumps of three praying—many praying out loud—you would have thought you had entered the wrong church. Perhaps you had mistakenly entered Bethel Pentecostal Church, down the street, instead of St. Paul. But there we were praying this prayer: **"Wake up, Spencer."** We, along with thousands, were praying for Spencer Bacus to emerge from his coma and continue his healing process.

We all love Spencer. We have heard him in the Angel Choir, Heavenly Harmony choir, and seen him the Christmas plays at church. We have watched him in the plays at Roxana Jr. and Sr. High School. He has been an acolyte and faithful participant in our youth groups.

When Deb, Meg, and I moved into the parsonage, Spencer and Oliver were among our first guests. They knocked on the door and Spencer introduced himself and his brother. Oliver immediately commented: *"Gee, they have a lot of boxes."* Spencer's reply was: *"Dummy, they just moved in!"* Through the years, both Spencer and Oliver have brought laughter and joy into our lives.

The trouble with churches is that they are no better than we are. Too often, they fail to live as Christ's bride. Like us, the church continually falls short of the glory of God. Ah, but there are those moments when the church is functioning as Christ's body on this earth. When we were gathered in prayer on November 19th it was one of those holy moments that offer glimpses of what the church is meant to be every day.

Oh, we all were offering up individual prayers for Spencer since his illness. Those prayers have been heard and are important. However, there is a dynamic power when God's people come together around a common prayer, when God's own Spirit joins with our spirit in prayer. Even when some of us were so broken that we didn't know what to pray except: **Wake up, Spencer.** This is a house of prayer and we are a people of prayer. I saw that truth revealed on November 19th.

Four days later came what Mark & Debbie call the *Thanksgiving Miracle*. Spencer woke up. Most of the tubes that helped Spencer breathe and eat are gone. More medical challenges await Spencer and he continues to need our prayers. Still, Spencer knows he isn't alone. He is surrounded by people of prayer. One of Spencer's first requests to his parents was that he wanted to go to church.

I realize that this isn't a usual Christmas message, but isn't the great message of Christmas that Emmanuel, God is with us. God is not up there, but down here. He is an ever present help in our time of need. And, we are Spencer's church, the Body of Christ who is prepared to humble ourselves in prayer for him and any one in need to prayer. During this season of preparation for Christmas, we invite you to join us in Sunday worship at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Your voice added to ours will make our prayers even more powerful.

Pastor Daryl

P.S. You are invited to a fundraiser for Spencer's medical expenses on Sun., Dec.3 at 2 p.m. in the Roxana High School auditorium. The cost is \$2 per person or \$10 for a family of 5 or more. There is also a *Go Fund Me* page <https://www.gofundme.com/spencer-bacus-medical-expenses> where you may download a song called *Open Your Eyes!* It was produced by a couple of Mark's musician friends. On this page, you may donate whatever you choose to give toward Spencer's medical expenses.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOUS!

- Congratulations to **Jordan Bruns & Joshua Brown** who united their lives in marriage on Sat., Nov. 11 at St. Paul. Jordan is the daughter of Gregory Bruns and Carie Lyerla; Joshua is the son of Robert & Gina Brown. We pray that Jordan & Joshua's home will always be a place of peace with Christ at the center of it.
- Thank you to everyone who helped with the **Community Thanksgiving Worship Service**. To **Rev. Keith Michaels and East Alton First United Methodist Church** for hosting when we could not. To **Kay Gwaltney** for preparing communion and the **Nurture Ministry Team** for bringing refreshments. To **Rhonda Griffin and the Worship Choir** for the excellent music. To **Rev. David Rose** of Wood River/Wanda United Methodist Churches for an excellent message on being thankful based upon the one leper who returned to thank Jesus. To **Julie Gvillo** for the Thanksgiving wreath and bulletin information. For all who came to worship. The service was sponsored by the Wood River Township Ministerial Alliance. The Thanksgiving Offering was **\$177.26**. We praise God for the generosity of those attending. This special offering supported the Benevolence Fund which assists transients and provides emergency prescriptions for the poor leaving the hospital.
- Thank you to **Randy McLain** for serving as sound tech at Robert Kissack Sr.'s service and **Mark Mayer** for the same role at Vi Potter's service.
- Congratulations to our sixth graders who were presented Study Bibles on Bible Sunday, Nov. 19: **Chloe Allshouse, Madelyn Cranmer, Lucas Gebhardt, Christian Greer, Rachel Schiber, Kansas Scoggins, and Cecilia Suermann**. May you learn and grow in the Lord as you read your Bible.
- We **thank the Worship Ministry Team** for decorating the church so beautifully for Christmas. Your efforts have enhanced our celebration during this holy season.
- Our prayers and deepest sympathies go to those who have lost loved ones recently. The family of **Larmar Leady**, brother of Carol Russell and brother-in-law of Lois Leady; the family of **Shirley Frakes**, sister of Joan Ford; the family of **Lyle Laslie**, brother-in-law of Dorothy Kasinger; the family of **Harold Atchley**, father/father-in-law of Duane & Tammy Atchley; and the family of **Edward Hamlin**, father of Mark Hamlin. May you all know God's comfort and peace in the days ahead.
- Thank you to the crew **from Gillihan Concrete of Edwardsville** for the outstanding work you did on the front handicap parking area! **(SEE PHOTO TO RIGHT)**

THANK YOU: Thank You ALL!!! I just received the donation from the Coat & Shoe Collection! I counted 18 coats, 8 jackets, 7 pairs of shoes, and 3 hats/gloves.
Judy Gann, Riverbend HeadStart & Family Services

THANK YOU: During this Thanksgiving season we want you to know how grateful we are for your support. It is because of you that we are able to impact the lives of over 1,200 children and families each year! Thank you and best wishes during this holiday season. **Chuck Parr (President & CEO) and the Board of Directors of the Riverbend HeadStart & Family Services**





2017 Christmas Cantata!

Each year at Christmas we celebrate Emmanuel: God with us. This year, stand in the shoes of those who first heard the incredible news that Christ was coming! Imagine being present on the night Jesus was born-- knowing that you were chosen to

be part of delivering, witnessing, and receiving the Good News. How would it feel to cast your eyes on a baby lying in a manger, and know that at this moment you are in the presence of God-- that on this very night, everything's changed: God is among us!

The Cantata will be presented on Sunday, Dec. 17th at the 10:30 a.m. service.



We must say goodbye to our **Parish Nurse, Eileen Cheatham**, this month. Alton Memorial Hospital will no longer sponsor a Parish Nurse program.

We are having a **Goodbye Luncheon** for her on **Wednesday, Dec. 6th at Noon @ Madison's in Wood River (133 Ferguson Avenue)**. We will be in the main eating area so come join us if you want to help us wish her well!

GIFT OF JESUS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

— PSALM 107: 8-9 NIV

GINGERBREAD HOUSE TIME!



Children of all ages are invited to stay after the 10:30 a.m. service on **December 17** to enjoy lunch and an opportunity to decorate a gingerbread house. **Reservations** are requested and there is a sign-up sheet in the Education wing on the big bulletin board. Bring your friends! **No cost!** Parents are welcome for lunch and building. Houses will be pre-made from graham crackers.



Sundays at St. Paul in DECEMBER 8:15 & 10:30 A.M. Services

"More Jesus Time" for Pre-school - 5th grade and Nursery is provided during the 10:30 a.m. service.

Our 8:15 a.m. service is a traditional service with hymns played on our beautiful pipe organ by Rhonda Griffin. The Pastor leads worship clothed in a robe and stole. Communion is usually celebrated on the first Sunday of the month.



Our 10:30 a.m. service—*Awakening*—is based upon this verse from 2 Chronicles 16:9: *"God's eyes range from to and fro throughout the Earth looking to strengthen the person that would bend their heart toward Him."* The preaching focuses upon life lessons from the Bible. Music is played by a worship band. Words to the songs are projected on the screen or available on the entryway table. The Worship Choir and Hand Bell Choir provide special music. Communion is celebrated at the end of every service. The intent of both worship services is to connect, reconnect and draw people into a closer connection with Jesus Christ.



3: 1st Sunday of Advent. Communion celebrated in both services. Pastor Daryl begins a new sermon series, *From Humbug to Hallelujah*, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Scrooge's partner, Marley, says: *"I wear the chains I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded I on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you? Scrooge trembled more and more. "Or would you know, pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself?...It is a ponderous chain!"* What chains have you forged in life that need to be broken this Christmas by the Christ Child so you might live forgiven and free?



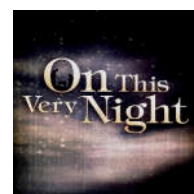
10: 2nd Sunday of Advent. Birthday Sunday. Pastor Daryl continues that sermon series, *From Humbug to Hallelujah*, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. If the Ghost of Christmas Past were to visit you what memories would be reawakened? Memories that would reconnect you with the true meaning of Christmas. When the Ghost of Christmas past visits



Scrooge: *"The Spirit gazed upon [Scrooge] mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odors floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long forgotten!"* Like Scrooge, we need to revisit the times when we experienced holy, festive moments. Then, to be transformed, we should start building memories that will reawaken Christmas joy, not only for this season but for many years to come.



17: 3rd Sunday of Advent. During the 8:15 a.m. service, Pastor Daryl continues the sermon series, *From Humbug to Hallelujah*, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Christmas is a season when we should make the effort to reconnect with people with whom we once had good relationships. Dickens writes: *[The Cratchits] were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last."* Tiny Tim's infectious spirit led Scrooge to reconnect with his nephew Fred and enjoy a Christmas meal with them. **During the 10:30 a.m. service, the Worship Choir presents the Cantata, *On This Very Night*. This year, stand in the shoes of those who first heard the incredible news that Christ was coming! THIS IS THE ONLY PERFORMANCE OF OUR CHRISTMAS CANTATA.** During both service, we celebrate **March to the Manger**. A family from St. Paul will portray the Holy Family and we will offer our Christmas offering as a sign of the offering of ourselves to the baby Jesus. We invite you to join this St. Paul tradition.



24: CHRISTMAS EVE. WE CELEBRATE WITH OUR 8:15 & 10:30 A.M. SERVICES AS WELL AS A FAMILY SERVICE AT 5 P.M. AND A TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE AT 7 P.M. On Sunday morning, Pastor Daryl continues the sermon series, *From Humbug to Hallelujah*, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Like Scrooge, each of us is given both the opportunity and the ability to write a good ending to our Christmas story. It is never too late to change who we are and what we do—with God's help! God can change our humbugs to hallelujahs! When Scrooge awoke after the visits of the three ghosts, Dickens writes: *"The bed was his own, the room was his*

SUNDAYS CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

**Nurse's Notes for DECEMBER 2017 from Parish Nurse, Eileen Cheatham RN, BC, B.S.N.****When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. Psalm 94:19**

I wonder if some of you are thinking what a strange Bible verse for what is considered the most wonderful time of the year! But I feel the need to discuss the pressure that many of you put on yourselves to have a “Merry Christmas” like we see on the Hallmark channel. The decorations are elaborate and beautiful, it always begins to snow on Christmas Eve, the boy always gets the girl, (or is it the other way around), and all is happy and joyful at the family dinner! But for some of us the holidays mean one thing: **STRESS!**



Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from demanding circumstances that can have both psychological and physical effects. When you feel anxious, rushed, or pressured, your body changes—your heart rate rises and some people even say they feel nauseous”. Usually, these effects are short-lived, but over time stress can take a toll on the body, especially if an individual doesn’t know how to handle stress well. What we need to understand is that the events themselves are not just stressful- it is our perception that stresses us out too! So why do we get stressed about seeing family, and around the holidays in particular? Expectations are one of the biggest reasons—we watch Christmas specials or remember celebrating the holidays as children- and anticipate an experience right out of a painting from Rockwell, but, often, that’s simply not a reality. We think this should be a perfect time, the food will be perfect, and our conversations will be respectful. But when our realities don’t match that, we get frustrated. The holidays can also be a time where we’re reminded of what we don’t have, when compared to TV holiday shows, or even experiences of others.

So what are we to do?

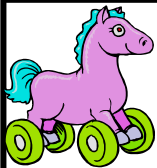
- **Manage your expectations** so that you do not get frustrated or angry. That thing your uncle does that makes you super angry? There's no reason to think he won't do it this year and that it won't trigger you. That power struggle you and your brother seem to have every time you're together? The fact that it's Christmas won't make it go away. There's no reason to assume that this family gathering will be different than any others, and preparing for that mentally can offset some of the disappointment. We all fall short from time to time!
- **Restructure the schedule!** If it is just too stressful to have Christmas on Christmas due to scheduling conflicts choose a different day. That simple shift may reduce some family members’ stress or guilt of trying to make it to many different locations in one day.
- **Keep the mood light!** This is a time to be thankful for all the Lord has done for us and enjoy family company- not to discuss heavy topics such as politics, social justice, or why Junior dropped out of college.
- **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. ◦Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. ◦Get plenty of sleep. Try to continue to get in some regular exercise during the week, or even after the big meal!
- **Focus on the true meaning of Christmas:** the babe in Bethlehem. The light in a very dark world. Our Savior has come, Immanuel. Rejoice!

For most of us with the typical amount of family baggage, going to the annual Christmas dinner is a compromise worth making. The event might be unpleasant at the time, but you’ll still go- because it’s important to someone who is important to you. When we think about what Christmas really is: God, who is love, humbling himself to come to earth to walk with man and die for our sins, and be resurrected on the third day, so that we may live with Him forever-then a little time with grumpy Aunt Gladys really doesn’t seem that bad.

Remember- love covers a multitude of sins. Just have realistic expectations, a sense of humor, and cover your holiday gatherings with lots and lots of prayer! With God’s help it can be transformed into a cherished family memory!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. You are cherished.

Eileen



CHURCH outreach for Christmas- THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU GAVE TO HELP THE CHILDREN THIS CHRISTMAS!



01-Dec Harvey Chiles
 01-Dec Amy Gowan
 01-Dec Bobbie Jean Schlemmer
 02-Dec Al Ortegren
 04-Dec Sandy Harlan
 05-Dec Meghan Sparling
 05-Dec Laura Voorhees
 06-Dec Lindsey Rader
 08-Dec Will Blacklock
 08-Dec Tammy Davis
 10-Dec Reid Adams
 10-Dec Erika Ramirez
 11-Dec Ruth Harris
 12-Dec Dorothy Kasinger
 13-Dec Jon Cameron
 13-Dec Jamie Gwaltney
 13-Dec Elise Myers
 14-Dec Mike Liedtke
 15-Dec Dan Duryea
 15-Dec Devin Eyster
 15-Dec Jessica Giddings
 15-Dec Becky Sullivan
 16-Dec Elaine Hart
 16-Dec Rick Helmkamp

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

"Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work!"

16-Dec Stephanie Palmer	29-Dec Billy Laws
16-Dec Emily Wells	29-Dec Doug Pascoe
18-Dec Joan Ford	30-Dec Devin Caldwell
19-Dec Heather Adams	30-Dec Jack Caldwell
19-Dec Gary Brown	30-Dec Ruth Voorhees
19-Dec Kailynne Cruthis	31-Dec Jim Herndon
19-Dec Megan Parker	31-Dec Lillian Maxwell
20-Dec Jenn Champa	31-Dec Susan Phelps
20-Dec Wayne Cloninger	31-Dec Iris Uzzell
20-Dec Brody Hendricks	
24-Dec Ben Brown	
24-Dec Kaydence Harlan	
24-Dec Kristina Harlan	
24-Dec Steve Kainz	
26-Dec Don Ford Sr.	
28-Dec Orisa Babcock	
28-Dec Madilyn Ross	
29-Dec Bill Basden	
29-Dec Ada Brueggeman	
29-Dec Glenn Hubbard	



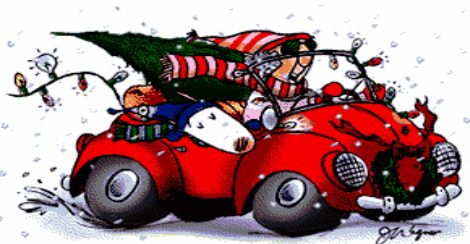
DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

06-Dec George & Donna Hamilton Sr.
 14-Dec Tom & Shana Vore
 16-Dec Anthony & Erika Ramirez
 19-Dec Steve & Jill Oertle
 20-Dec David & Donna Badman
 22-Dec Gary & Julie Brown
 24-Dec William & Jill Taylor-Sullivan

26-Dec Randy & Karen Roberts
 28-Dec Steve & Sarah Dawson
 29-Dec Don & Evelyn Bunt Sr.
 29-Dec Greg & Lana Mortland



Be Sure To Pick Up A copy of the current church Directory!



Please be sure to contact the church office if you have a change of address, phone number, or email address! Thank you!

**Merry Christmas to the
St. Paul family!**



MONTHLY LOOSE CHANGE PROJECT

December's Loose Change Project is the Salvation

Army in Alton. The Salvation Army helps individuals and families facing special hardships with food, transportation, rent, and utility assistance, as well as providing meals and shelter for the homeless. May God bless and multiply your gifts!

Call the Church Office (259-5210) if you would like to be a Greeter for either Sunday service!

Average Attendance for NOVEMBER 2017

Early Service	47
Late Service	73
Sunday School	42
Visitors	1



Capital Campaign money received as of 11-30-17: \$283,031.14

NOVEMBER Stewardship

Budget Offering:	through 11/30/2017	\$18055.00
Designated Giving:	through 11/30/2017	\$855.00
	Capital Improvements	90.00
	Loose Change	84.00
	Flowers	152.00
	Hickerson Scholarship	50.00
	Upper Room Donations	19.00
	Helping Hands	150.00
	Youth	15.00
	Brad Fester/Wycliffe	100.00
	Sweet Sounds	50.00
	Memorials	145.00
UM Student Offering		5.00
Thanksgiving Offering		386.00
World Communion Offering		20.00
Capital Campaign		1190.00
Total:		\$20511.00

**DEADLINE FOR
JANUARY 2018
STEEPLE, Mon.,
DECEMBER 18th!**

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION -
If bad weather requires the
cancellation of worship
services, we will:**

- ✦ **ACTIVATE OUR NEW PHONE TREE CALLING SYSTEM!**
- ✦ **leave a message on the office answering machine**
- ✦ **contact TV Channel 5**
- ✦ **post a notice on our website www.stpaulwired.org (if possible)**
- ✦ **contact those on the e-mail & phone prayer chain (if possible)**



**Salvation Army Bell Ringing
will be on Friday,
December 8th
10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Walmart in
Wood River (Grocery Doors)**

We ring with teams of two people each for one hour at a time... come and make a kettle donation while we are ringing the bells!





2018 NEWSLETTERS:

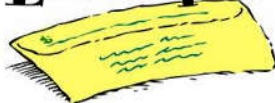
It is time to start thinking about the 2018 Newsletter (The Steeple). The cost to have the newsletter mailed directly to you at home will be **\$8.50**. Of course we will still email the Newsletter, place it on the website, and have copies at the church for you to pick up, to have extras to give to friends you invite to church, and for visitors to take. Send your request to have it mailed to you to the Church Office and your check for **\$8.50**. Any questions...call 259-5210.



It is time to order your poinsettias. The cost is **\$7** per poinsettia. The order deadline is Sunday,

December 10th. The poinsettias may be taken home following the services on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th. Fill out the bulletin insert. Remember to indicate when you order to whom it is "in memory" or "in honor" of and it is **important** to include your payment when you order. Questions? Call 259-5210.

Offering Envelopes



The 2018 Offering Envelopes will be handled differently than last years.

ALL 2018 Envelopes may be picked up in the church entryway beginning on Sunday, December 10th.

PLEASE, do not use them until January 2018.

If you would like to trade weekly envelopes for monthly or vise versa, call the office as soon as possible.

Thank you!!



THE WOMEN OF WORSHIP THANK YOU!

The Women of Worship offer a great big **THANK YOU** for everyone who helped in any way to make our **Christmas Boutique** a great success. We appreciate any donations and those who attended and purchased items. Our talented crafters enjoyed making and designing items which were for sale and hope that those of you who purchased gifts or decorations will enjoy them.



Money from **all** of our projects will be distributed at our **Christmas Potluck Luncheon Party on Thursday, Dec. 7th at NOON** with the business meeting to follow at **1:00 p.m.** **ALL** women of the church are invited to participate. Bring your favorite dish of food and join us!



PECANS:

The costs are:

\$10.00 for the 1lb. bag of plain and **\$8.00** for a bag of the chocolate covered.

The pecans being sold are a Fundraiser for the Women of Worship missions.

Want to keep Christ in Christmas?

Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you.

- Steve Maraboli



Caroling and Cocoa! Sunday, December 10 4:00—5:00 p.m.

Join us on the front lot for some holiday cheer! A group of carolers will be singing the songs of the season while you enjoy a hot cup of cocoa.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be dropping by so that the kids can take a photo and share what they want for Christmas. **The cost is FREE!** Just bring your own camera...see you there!

Christmas Offering



The Finance Committee and Church Council have decided that the **undesignated amount** of the Christmas Offering will be used for the general budget. The general budget provides the funds for the ministry and operating expenses of the church. As always, you are encouraged to designate your Christmas Offering for missionaries, ministries, or projects supported by St. Paul. There is a Christmas Offering envelope included in your box of envelopes. You may also use any pew envelope to make the Christmas Offering. Simply mark the envelope as your "Christmas Offering." Although your Christmas Offering may be placed in the offering plate on any Sunday or mailed to the Church Office, many people like to lay their offering at the feet of the baby Jesus during the **March to the Manger**. **March to the Manger occurs during both worship services on Dec. 17th.** Some people choose to wrap their offering as a gift for the baby Jesus.

*Celebrate the birth
of Christ at the
Christmas Eve Services*

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES:

5:00 p.m. Family-Oriented Service.

We tell the Christmas story, sing carols, interact with the children, and end with a candlelight service. This service lasts about 45 minutes.

7:00 p.m. Traditional Service.

The Christmas Service of most of our childhoods with the Scripture readings, familiar carols, and the Christmas story. The service concludes with a candlelight service. This service lasts about one hour.

SUNDAYS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

own. *Best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, to make amends in! "I will live in the past, the present, and the future!" Scrooge repeated as he stumbled out of bed. "The Spirits of all three shall strive within me. O Jacob Marley! Heaven and the Christmastime be praised for this!"* Our Wesleyan Heritage teaches that we may begin anew with God. Today may be different than yesterday.

31: NEW YEAR'S EVE. WE HAVE OUR REGULAR SERVICES AT 8:15 & 10:30 A.M. Pastor Daryl concludes the sermon series, *From Humbug to Hallelujah*, based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The New Year is a time to commit to new beginnings in our lives. Like Scrooge, we may be changed—truly changed. Dickens writes of Scrooge: *"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the past, the present, and the future. The Spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."* How unfortunate it would be to proclaim hallelujah during the Christmas season, only to revert to the cry of "Humbug" throughout the rest of the year! We must resolve to live in the Spirit of Christmas every day!



We Say Goodbye To Our Friend...



Violet “Vi” Irene Potter 94, formerly of Rosewood Heights, passed away Saturday, November 11, 2017 at Jerseyville Nursing & Rehab with her family at her side. Born August 28, 1923 in Alton, IL, she was the daughter of Charles D. & Elsie (Cline) Bryant. Violet was a longtime, active member of St. Paul United Methodist Church of Rosewood Heights.

On May 18, 1946 she married the former Lloyd Potter; he preceded her in death on December 19, 2014. Together they raised three children: Ronald L. Potter (Virginia) of Montgomery, IL, John Michael Potter (Deanne) of Newton, IL and Donna (Potter) Maurer of Tecumseh, MO.

Besides her three children and their spouses she is also survived by her five grandchildren: Elizabeth (Ver Vynck) Tomkowiak, Michael Ver Vynck (DeeAnn), John Ver Vynck (Joanne), Joshua Potter (Briana), and Shane Maurer; ten great grandchildren, Jennifer McCoy (Jason), James Guzzo, Kylie Guzzo, Michael Tomkowiak, Cassandra Ver Vynck, Tyler Ver Vynck, Nicholas Ver Vynck, Avery Ver Vynck, Aaron Ver Vynck, and Evan Ver Vynck; and two great great grandchildren: Kailani Schramer, and Olivia McCoy.

Violet was also involved with the Red Hats and enjoyed singing with the Sweet Sounds. After retiring, Lloyd & Vi made many new friends at their winter home in Apache, AZ.

Besides her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by four sisters: Jessie Brandon, LaVern Martin, Lelia Minor, Niomi (Buis) Watson.

A special thank you to Jeannie Marshall and her family, and Bobby Buis and his family for all the love and support they have provided Sweet Violet and our family.

“Shout happily to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD cheerfully. Come into his presence with a joyful song. Realize that the LORD alone is God. He made us, and we are his. We are his people and the sheep in his care. Enter his gates with a song of thanksgiving. Come into his courtyards with a song of praise. Give thanks to him; praise his name. The LORD is good. His mercy endures forever. His faithfulness endures throughout every generation.” Psalm 100 (God’s Word)

Next week is Thanksgiving. I know that your family was looking forward to celebrating that holiday with Vi next week. Death has cheated you out of sharing one more Thanksgiving together. Death is—as Paul named it—the last enemy. It is the destroyer of all that is good upon this earth.

Knowing our disappointment and sorrow, why would I choose a Thanksgiving psalm to read today? There is one reason: Vi Potter is a sheep resting firmly in the fold of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. I don’t have to preach Vi into heaven as they say. Vi is in heaven because she was saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the midst of our sadness, let this truth give us comfort as family and friends.

Psalm 100 is a believer’s psalm, sung before entering the Temple. The Temple is where the writer has worshiped often and he anticipates the joy of meeting God there once more. Nothing is more blessed for the believer than to be in God’s house. Vi loved worshiping on Sundays in this sanctuary. She missed it so much when ill health kept her away. This was a happy place, a joyful place, a loving place for her. Those feelings that the writer felt as he entered the gates of the Temple, Vi felt as she entered this sacred place through the red doors.

The Jews believed that God’s throne was the ark of the covenant—the wooden chest containing the stone tablets of The 10 Commandments—that resided in the inner most room of the Temple. When you entered the Temple, you came into God’s presence. We believe in the promise of Jesus that God is present wherever two or three people are gathered in Jesus’ name. The red eternal light reminds us that Jesus is here.

As we grieve, Jesus’ Spirit comes along side our spirit to support us and see us through today and the hard days ahead. When our sorrow is so deep that we cannot find the words to express it, Jesus’ Spirit will pray for us. We are not alone.

Vi Potter Continued on Page 11



**"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son.
And they will call him Immanuel- God with us."**

~Matthew 1:23~

Advent is upon us and the bustling of the holiday season has already begun. It seems as though this time of year comes sooner every year. I am sure there were Christmas wreaths out whenever I was back to school shopping for my children this past August!

How humbling it is to know that Jesus was sent to this earth to save us from our sins. In the birth of a tiny, newborn baby, all hope was given to us in God's eternal promise. That hope began in a manger, filled with animals and straw. It was not a birth captured by an expensive photographer, surrounded by all of the latest baby gadgets- it was simply the birth of a baby boy that would someday save mankind from all of their sins.

And while the focus is not on the birthing conditions for our Lord and Savior, the focus is on one person- Jesus Christ. Just as we focus on the (real) story of Christmas, we should always focus on Christ. Whether you attend Traditional worship at 8:15 a.m. or the Awakening service at 10:30 a.m., the only focus of your worship should be God. We hope that each service is speaking to your hearts and filling you with the Holy Spirit.

God Bless You and Merry Christmas!

Lauren Cranmer - Awakening Worship Coordinator

Vi Potter Continued from Page 10

The stone walls of the Temple and the high ceilings were meant to impress upon the Jews that they worshiped a grand and glorious God. The soaring ceiling in this sanctuary draws our eyes toward heaven and remind us that God is the Creator and we are the creature. God made us and we are His. We are His people—not merely upon this earth—but for all eternity.

Until then, we trust God. We trust that God knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows what is best for us because he loves us. The Lord is good, his mercy endures forever.

Listen to the last sentence of this Psalm: **His faithfulness endures throughout every generation.** Jesus explains to the disciples and all who will listen that we share in His inheritance. We are the sons and daughters of God. Our inheritance is this: we share in Jesus' death and resurrection. In our baptism, we die to our old life and are raised to new life. The life offered to us by Jesus. Even though we die, yet shall we live! This is our inheritance. Jesus is the first in a long line of people whom God raises from the dead.

Today, we cry—not for Vi—but for ourselves. Vi is beyond all the pain and suffering. She is in the presence of her Lord and Savior forever. She is singing the glad songs sung by those gathered around the throne of the Lamb.

The life that Vi enjoys in heaven is not intended for her alone, but for each one of us. God's faithfulness endures throughout every generation. Indeed, Vi pointed us to the faith that gives us comfort and hope today. Other families might make different choices, but Vi and Lloyd chose to enter God's gates with a song of thanksgiving. They would come into his courtyards with a song of praise. It was Vi's choice that we gather here to celebrate her life because here is where she celebrated each Sunday the life that is ours in Jesus Christ. For Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

Once more, Vi reaffirmed with her choice of this song for today: **BECAUSE HE LIVES, I CAN FACE TOMORROW; BECAUSE HE LIVES, ALL FEAR IS GONE; BECAUSE I KNOW HE HOLDS THE FUTURE, AND LIFE IS WORTH THE LIVING JUST BECAUSE HE LIVES.**

Please keep Vi's entire family in your prayers. May the power of the resurrection give them comfort and hope.
Pastor Daryl





We Say Goodbye To Our Friend...

Robert D. (Bob) Kissack of Wood River, Illinois, beloved husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, & great-grandfather, passed away at the age of 89 on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017 at Meridian Village in Glen Carbon, IL.

Bob was retired from the Roxana School System where he was a teacher, coach, and administrator for 36 years. He is survived by his wife and college sweetheart of 67 years, Joy (nee Levin) Kissack, his daughter Karen (Randy) Roberts, his son Bob (Judy) Kissack, his three grandchildren, Laurie (John) Myers, Jeff (Noelle) Brummett, and Kristie (Jason) Shelby and his eight great-grandchildren Elise, Claire, and Johnny Myers, Declan and Delaney Brummett, and Beckham, Bodhi, and Boone Shelby. He is also survived by his brother Harold Kissack of Rochelle, IL.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Everett (Bud) and Berneice Kissack and his sister Darlene.

Services are at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Rosewood Heights, where he was a member for over 65 years.

“Teach me, LORD, the meaning of your laws, and I will obey them at all times. Explain your law to me, and I will obey it; I will keep it with all my heart. Keep me obedient to your commandments, because in them I find happiness. Give me the desire to obey your laws rather than to get rich. Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless; be good to me, as you have promised. Psalm 119: 33-37 (God’s Word)”

This is the longest Psalm—176 verses. Aren’t you glad I didn’t read it in its entirety? Most psalms deal with dramatic events. This Psalm deals with our ordinary life where we live 90% of the time. It is a primer for how to live as a godly person in a world that is so often ungodly. The writer is a teacher because he has taken what he has learned and seeks to pass on his knowledge to the next generation—probably his children.

As a teacher this passage captures those qualities that make one a good teacher. First, **a teacher is passionate about his subject**. The law is not an inanimate thing written on stone tablets stored in the inner room of the Temple. The law is the expression of a living, caring God’s desire for his life. He says: **“KEEP ME FROM PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT IS WORTHLESS; BE GOOD TO ME, AS YOU HAVE PROMISED. KEEP YOUR PROMISE TO ME, YOU SERVANT—THE PROMISE YOU MAKE TO THOSE WHO OBEY YOU.”** Bob understood that unless you cared about your subject matter, your students would not care either. You can’t fake passion.

Second, **a teacher is knowledgeable about his subject**. The writer of this psalm is so confident in his knowledge of God’s ways that he boasts: **“I WILL LIVE IN PERFECT FREEDOM, BECAUSE I TRY TO OBEY YOUR TEACHINGS. I WILL ANNOUNCE YOUR COMMANDS TO KINGS AND I WILL NOT BE ASHAMED.”** In a time when kings were all-powerful, it takes a bold person to be willing to stand up and say *this is the word of the Lord to us*. This teacher is so immersed in the law that he is confident that what he is teaching is true. Indeed, VS. 89 SAYS: **“GOD’S WORD IS ESTABLISHED IN HEAVEN FOREVER.”** In some fields like science, knowledge is always changing as new discoveries are being made. However, the God’s laws capture eternal truths.

Third, **a teacher must be authentic; especially one who teaches spiritual truths**. He doesn’t merely talk the talk, he walks the talk. The psalmist knows firsthand the joy that comes from keeping the law. The law is no burden but a source of joy and happiness in his life. He says: **“TEACH ME, LORD, THE MEANING OF YOUR LAWS, AND I WILL OBEY THEM AT ALL TIMES. EXPLAIN YOUR LAW TO ME, AND I WILL OBEY IT; I WILL KEEP IT WITH ALL MY HEART. KEEP ME OBEDIENT TO YOUR COMMANDMENTS BECAUSE IN THEM I FIND HAPPINESS.”** Students know those teachers who care for them as a whole person. Teachers who care—not only that they pass their class—but also care that they do well in life.

Last night and today are testimony to the positive impact Bob Kissack made in the lives of his students and colleagues throughout his teaching career. Bob’s faith was evident in the godly love and respect with which he treated his students and colleagues.

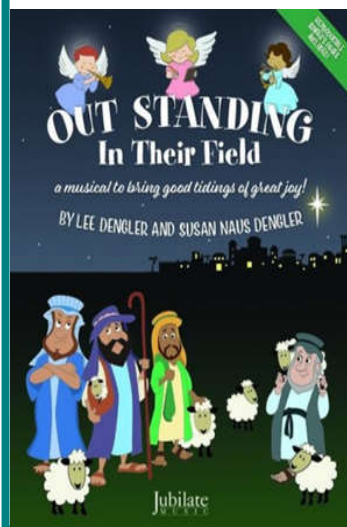
Vs. 105 says: **“YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT FOR MY PATH.”** If Bob Kissack had failed in passing on this truth to his children, Karen and Bob, his three grandchildren, Laurie, Jeff, and Kristie and his eight great-grandchildren Elise, Claire, and Johnny, Declan and Delaney, and Beckham, Bodhi, and Boone he would

Bob Kissack Continues on Page 13



Christmas Dinner & Program

It is a St. Paul tradition for the church to gather for a Christmas Dinner. During November you will have an opportunity to make reservations for this year's **Christmas Dinner** (prepared by Chef Bob) on **Saturday, December 9th at 6 p.m.** There is no set charge for the dinner. Instead, **we all make a donation for the meal.** **Reservation forms** will be in the Sunday bulletins. Please fill **one** out for your family. If you cannot be here to do this, **please call the church office (259-5210)** during the week or email info@stpaulwired.org to leave your information with the church secretary.



Dinner will be followed by **"Out Standing In Their Field,"** (a musical featuring our children & youth) tells the Christmas story, using both familiar carols and fun, new songs, with a ragtag group of shepherds and a colorful company of angels. Meet Clarence, the concerned angel, Gabriel, the "cool" trumpet-playing angel, Oscar, the grouchy shepherd, Missy, the exuberant shepherd-in-training, and more as they find their way to the manger...while learning that with the birth of Jesus, everyone is truly outstanding!

Great music, audience participation, & surprises will be in store for those who join us on **Dec. 9!** So plan now to attend it all! It is a wonderful evening filled with the joy of Christmas fellowship around the table as well as enjoying our children & youth sharing the news of the baby Jesus!



KIND is a new youth group being offered at St. Paul UMC. While we will focus on the biblical teachings of the Bible, we will also seek to be agents of change in a world that could use a little more kindness.

If you're looking for a way to connect your children to both church and community, have them check out the new youth group on the first and third Sunday of each month. The youth group was slated for 6th – 12th grades, however, **4th & 5th graders - we invite you to join us for youth group! We meet from 4-5:30 p.m.** We encourage participation from any and all youth!

In Christ's Love and Kindness, Lauren Cranmer - Youth Leader

Bob Kissack Continues from Page 12

have failed as a teacher. The value of parents and grandparents in any society is to pass on to the next generation what is truly important. Bob believed that being a good, godly person is more important than any riches this world offers. Bob's teaching career has ended and now it remains for us to take the lessons he taught and apply them to our lives, so we might live as well as he did.

One of the great truths is that God has a big house. There is room for all under its roof. And when we arrive on the doorstep, God is there to greet us with these words: **"Well done, good and faithful Servant. Enter into eternal joy."** Today, we trust in this because Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Even though we die, we will be raised to new life just as He was. Please pray for Joy and Robert Kissack, Sr.'s entire family. Pastor Daryl



**Jesus is the Reason
For the Season!**

**Merry Christmas
Everyone!**



ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

PRESERVING THE PHYSICAL INTEGRITY OF ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
AS A FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND MISSIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Mission Possible

"THROUGH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE" MATTHEW 19:26

UNDERSTANDING & GIVING TO MISSION POSSIBLE

Mission Possible is a campaign to provide funding above and beyond our normal operational costs to address much needed maintenance and renovation work at St. Paul. The primary target of the campaign is the replacement of our aging heating and air conditioning system (HVAC) as well as other needed items for our church building and senior parsonage. We do this in large part as we consider the future of the ministry of St. Paul UMC and the over 50 diverse ministries that radiate from our church home. The **October 2015 Mission Possible Commitment Weekend** was the kickoff to our fund raising campaign. One can still participate. **In order that we can know where we stand with pledges, we ask that you fill out a commitment card (which is available in the church office) if you plan to give to the Mission Possible Campaign.**

Providing your gift(s):

- If you are interested in a one-time gift, send the donation to the church or place it in the Sunday offering, **but please be sure to note Mission Possible (or CFC for Capital Fund Campaign) on your check memo line and offering envelope.**
- You can also give online through our website.
- You can give using your credit card when you provide that information to the church office.
- You can give by cash or check.
- You can also provide financial contributions via securities, real estate, personal properties, or an estate gift by contacting the church office or Jim Herndon.

Beginning **January 2016**, you were able to place the designated amount for "Mission Possible" gifts on the **Capital Campaign** line on your offering envelopes. Donations toward the expenses of our Church Operations (i.e. the General Budget) would go on the **Undesignated** line as always. What was Capital Improvements, funds meant for unexpected major expenses, is now labeled **Building & Grounds Improvements** on the 2016 –2018 envelopes. **If you have any questions, please call the Church Office.**