

#### **Greetings People of Infinite Worth!**

In my devotional time today, I read **Psalm 105**. I urge you to read it also. Psalm 105 is a summation of much of the Old Testament. It begins with the covenant God made with Abraham and it ends with the former Hebrew slaves praising God as they enter the Promised Land. What happens between the two events is nothing more or less than life on life's terms.

Wonderful things happen to God's people! They receive an everlasting covenant with God who promises he has adopted them as his special people and that they can always turn to him for help. In verse 15 we read that God speaks to earthly kings who attempt to harm his people, "do not touch My appointed ones." God protects his chosen people. A young man named Joseph rises to power in what can only be called a divine appointment with history. He is given the position of Prime Minister by Pharaoh, and through his wisdom and courage, Egypt is saved from the famine that overtakes much of the area. Joseph is placed so that when his family comes to him for help, he does not only give them food, but he invites them to live in Egypt with him in comfort and abundance. Joseph's family grows and thrives in Egypt; their numbers increase over many generations. God sends Moses, another unlikely leader to lead them out of slavery in Egypt. The Egyptian people hand over their jewels and gold as the Hebrew people left. Throughout their journey, God guides them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. As God promised, the former slaves arrive at the Promised Land.

Interspersed in that long list of blessings is heartache and trouble. Abraham & Sarah wait a long time to have a baby. Young Joseph is threatened by his brothers and sold into slavery. While a slave in the house of Potiphar, Joseph is falsely accused and sent to prison for years. Over time the Egyptian leaders forgot about what Joseph as Prime Minister did for them and they take the Hebrew people into slavery. Generations of oppression weigh heavily on the Hebrew people. Moses speaks for the Hebrew people, and Pharaoh's heart just keeps getting harder and harder toward the overburdened slaves. What should have been a brief journey to the Promised Land becomes a 40-year trial across the desert.

Life is like the two preceding paragraphs except it all runs together. It is a rollercoaster of blessings and sorrows. Counting our blessings is certainly a terrific practice, but it does not always offer hope. Sadly, it can become an empty platitude when we dismiss the suffering of others as if it were not real because it is not our experience. Don't get me wrong, gratitude is important, but is not the entire answer because so many people are truly suffering and struggling. We all need hope, but

hope is not born of long gratitude lists. Hope does not lie in maintaining a positive attitude. Hope is not nurtured by denial of difficult circumstances. Hope lies in our trust that God is good and that he is working his plan. We are part of his plan and sometimes his plan is frighteningly similar to a wild ride on a rollercoaster. Hope hangs on despite the wildness of the ride. Hope lies in that knowledge that difficulties end and things will be good again. God is still on the throne, so hold on. Amen.

Love to all, Pastor Debra





EFLECTIONS...



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## OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOUS!

- Our deepest sympathy goes out to each family that has recently lost a loved one. This includes the families of Rava Lombardo, neighbor of Lois Mitchell and Ruth Bell; Marsha (Arnold) Lindenmuth, a special West Virginia college student of Lois Mitchell; Alice Anderson, sister of Judy (Keith) Moore and Cynthia Moore; Mike Fagan, nephew of Jim (Maggie) Funke; and Thomas Raglin, a dear friend (from the Alton Museum of History & Art) of Lois Mitchell and Ruth Bell. May all who are touched by loss know God's peace now & in the days ahead.
- Congratulations to Harry & Andrea (Kasten) Reed on the birth of their daughter, Delaney Rosalie Reed! She was born on August 1st and weighed 7lbs. 12.5oz. Her very delighted greatgrandmother (who now has 7 great-granddaughters!) is Rosalie Toner. Her grandparents are Debbie & Ross Eggebrecht and Bill Kasten. We ask God to richly bless this new family!
- Congratulations to **Grace Miller & George Keagle** who were united in marriage on Sat., August 29th at the Uzzell's home! May God richly bless your wonderful new life together!

**<u>Thank you</u>** all for the beautiful cards, the calls, etc. following my surgery! I am healing nicely and the physical therapist is very pleased with my progress! God bless you all! **Leona Hendricks** 

**<u>Thank you</u>** for all the wonderful birthday cards, gifts, FB notes, and calls! I had a fabulous August birthday and you helped make it happen! God bless you all! **Lois Mitchell** 

**To Pastor Debra -** <u>Thank you</u> so much for your lovely service at my mother's funeral (Nelba Goodman)! I so appreciate your kindness. May you and the congregation be blessed! *Pat Griffith* 



#### We Say Goodbye To Our Dear Friend...

**Mary A. Meyer,** 76, passed away on Sunday, July 26, 2020 at Barnes Jewish Hospital.

She was born on Aug. 11, 1943 the daughter of Charles M. & Prattie A. (Kinnison) Hinkle in Alton, Illinois. She married Larry M. Meyer on Feb. 19, 1965 in East Alton, IL at St. Paul UMC in the then brand new sanctuary, and he preceded her in death.

Mary was a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church since June 10, 1958. Mary worked for many years at American Steele Foundation prior to retirement as Village Clerk in Bethalto

where she worked from 1988 to 2000.

She is survived by one daughter, Angela (Angel) Meyer of Minnesota; one sister, Carrol J. Howard of Arkansas; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Besides her husband, Mary was also preceded in death by her parents; and one nephew, Michael Howard.

Visitation and funeral were held on Friday, Aug. 7 at Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home in Bethalto, IL, with Pastor Doug Pascoe officiating. Burial took place at Rose Lawn Memory Gardens in Bethalto.

Mary has been through a lot and now she is rejoicing with her Savior. We will miss her. Please remember to keep her family in your prayers.



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#### WE SAY GOODBYE TO CHERI TRUSTY

This is difficult for Cheri and for St. Paul UMC. Cheri must leave her job as our organist because her mother is in great need of her assistance

and she lives far away. Cheri, we understand how important it is to help our family members, and so we say goodbye and that our prayers go with you. We sure will miss you! **God Bless You!** Rayford Raby will be helping us for now.

#### WESLEY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Teacher Iris Uzzell has restarted the Wesley Sunday School class. It meets at **9:15 a.m. in the Parlor**. If you would like to join them, wear a mask, plan to spread out, and know that the room will be well disinfected! The class is studying **"Attitude Is Your Paintbrush"** by James Moore. If you have questions, give Iris a call at **259-8106** today! There is room for more people!



# In a world where you can be anything... Be kind!

**KIND** Youth began studying **Genesis 37** and the **story of Joseph** during the month of August. We will be examining our own jealousies, rivalries, and ultimately how to forgive others when they hurt our feelings. We continue to meet over video call. If you want to join us please call Lauren at **660-7967**.

**Patterson & Lauren** will be welcoming a baby boy in the New Year! We are excited and surprised to be blessed with an addition to our family. Please keep us in your prayers as we navigate this new season of life in a time when the world seems upside down.

#### Questions? Call Lauren at 660-7967.

We love you, church, and love your prayers for us! In God's Love and Kindness, Lauren Friese - Youth Director



## UMCOR GETS MANY CALLS FOR HELP

UMCOR has awarded a solidarity grant to The Middle East Council of Churches in support of their response to extensive needs following explosions in **Beirut**. These funds will help to procure and deliver essential food and hygiene supplies to vulnerable residents, providing immediate relief in the wake of this disaster. Join UMCOR in its work of international disaster response.

#### GIVE TODAY: https://umcmission.social/beirut

We also extend prayers for the communities impacted by the mighty high-wind storm, or "**derecho**," **that roared through the Midwest U.S.** earlier this month. Initial assessments and relief efforts for the wide-spread damage are being organized by UMCOR-trained conference disaster response coordinators. UMCOR is in communication with the conferences and stands ready to offer support.

GIVE TODAY: https://umcmission.social/usdr





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## Sunday Services at St. Paul in SEPTEMBER

<u>INFORMATION:</u> We are now able to bring the message each Sunday to you <u>inside and</u> <u>outside</u>, on the Facebook Pages, and on the Website. The online service will continue even now we are back in the building for those who still cannot join us. The Facebook Pages are: <u>St. Paul United Methodist - East Alton, IL</u> and <u>AwakeningWorshipSTPUMC</u> The Website is: <u>www.stpaulwired.org</u> - look under **Sermons** for the link.



**6th:** SERMON SERIES: BECAUSE GOD Message: Holding Fast Scripture: *Matthew 16:21-28*.

In our new sermon series, So Not Fair, we will consider how things seem so unfair.

**13th:** SERMON SERIES: SO NOT FAIR Message: How To Fight Like A Christian Scripture: *Matthew 18:15-20.* 

**20th:** SERMON SERIES: SO NOT FAIR Message: Forgiveness Math Scripture: *Matthew 18:21-35.* 

27th: SERMON SERIES: SO NOT FAIR Message: A Fair Wage Scripture: *Matthew 20:1-16*.





#### WORSHIP UNDER THE TREES ON SUNDAYS IS IN THE CHURCH AMPHITHEATER AT <u>8:45 a.m.</u> IT WILL GO THROUGH SEPTEMBER!

(In case of extreme weather or uncomfortable conditions, the service will have to be moved inside. Please watch email, Facebook pages, etc. for more information as things can change daily.)

→ AS WE TRY TO IMAGINE WHAT OUR SERVICES WILL LOOK LIKE ONCE WE MUST BRING THE 8:45 a.m. SERVICE INSIDE, WE ASK YOU TO BE IN <u>PRAYER FOR</u> <u>THE DECISIONS</u> WE WILL MAKE, AND THAT WE WILL ALL CONTINUE TO COME TOGETHER TO WORSHIP AND PRAISE GOD EACH WEEK! BE DILIGENT ABOUT READING ANY EMAIL OR LETTER THAT COMES YOUR WAY, OR A MESSAGE FROM "OTTO" AS IT MAY HAVE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT <u>SERVICES</u> COME <u>OCTOBER</u>! WE WANT TO KEEP YOU UP-TO-DATE AS WE KNOW THINGS! SEPTEMBER · 2020 · STEEPLE



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## 2020 FALL FESTIVAL THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8th Will not happen this year...

NO Fall Festival, but you can still enjoy our "Famous Chicken & Noodles." Yes, that is right! We are having a "carry-out chicken & noodle luncheon event" on

Sunday, October 11 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at St. Paul UMC. A large order of chicken & noodles, green beans, and a roll all for \$10.00 per meal. We will have a drive-thru service or walk-up curbside in our back parking lot. Please invite your family & friends. To help us prepare enough food, we really need your "RSVP." Call the church office (259-5210) or email the church (info@stpaulwired.org) with how many meals you want. Are you hungry now??? ©





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## September Birthdays

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

13-Sep 13-Sep 14-Sep 14-Sep 16-Sep 16-Sep 16-Sep 17-Sep 17-Sep 18-Sep 18-Sep	Susan Cameron Chelsea Georgeoff Kathy Link Dan Bunt Kiley Herndon Jerry Cameron Dick Redden Jeff Skjerseth Jeff Greer Nic Weigler Christian Greer Linda Scroggins
19-Sep	Bettie Lewis Paul Skjerseth
19-Sep 20-Sep	Ashley Springer Blake Boeshans
20-Sep	David Buatte
21-Sep 21-Sep	Ella Clark Dani Wilson
22-Sep	Neil Herndon
22-Sep	Carol Warner
23-Sep	Baylee Allshouse

23-Sep Harvey Gowan 23-Sep Nathan Shewmake 24-Sep Tanner Betts 24-Sep Tim Bunt 24-Sep Kellie Greer 25-Sep Hayley Schlemer 25-Sep Phil Tite 26-Sep Bob Blacklock 26-Sep Sarah Laufersweiler 26-Sep Ashley Poore 26-Sep Lily Roberts 26-Sep Debbie Tite 26-Sep Jan Williams 27-Sep David Betts 27-Sep Becky Chester 27-Sep Donna Ewing 27-Sep Joyce Hutchens 27-Sep Sharon Inman 29-Sep Jordan Brown 29-Sep Kara Martin 29-Sep Steven Tite

## September ANNIVERSARIES

- 02-Sep Jason & Gretchen Henderson
- 04-Sep Daryl & Deb Fansler
- 06-Sep Jason & Lindsey Mayer
- 13-Sep Phil & Debbie Tite
- 15-Sep Donovan & Caitlyn Hale
- 16-Sep Christopher & Megan Ricketts
- 17-Sep Chris & Susan Cameron
- 18-Sep Jerry & Cathy Cameron
- 19-Sep Cory & Caroline Crandall
- 20-Sep Bryan & Katie Clark
  20-Sep Ross & Debbie Eggebrecht
  24-Sep Nicholas & Julie Hobbs
  26-Sep Ryan & Savannah Cincoski
  26-Sep Don & Diane Ford Sr.
  27-Sep Ryan & Megan Parker
  29-Sep Gary & Shirley Clark



## Information on the Church Directory for 2020-2021!

Please contact the church office if you have had a <u>change of address</u>, <u>phone number</u>, or <u>email address</u> since the last printing! The 2020-2021 Church Directory will be completed as soon as possible after we all are coming to church again! Thank you!



#### $\textbf{SEPTEMBER} \cdot \textbf{2020} \cdot \textbf{STEEPLE}$

#### **AUGUST Stewardship**

Budget Offering:	through 8/31/2020	\$14620.00
Designated Giving:	through 8/31/2020	\$1702.67
	Capital Improvements	170.00
	Loose Change	72.67
	Flowers	30.00
	Upper Room	10.00
	Hickerson Scholarship	0.00
	Gideons International	20.00
	UMCOR	100.00
	Helping Hands	1050.00
	Reimbursements	0.00
	Memorials	250.00
Online Giving		250.00
Capital Campaign		750.00
Total:		\$17322.67

#### **GENERAL CONFERENCE**

Organizers have confirmed that the next General Conference will now be on <u>Aug. 29-Sept. 7, 2021</u> in Minneapolis. The organizers are still looking for ways to ensure delegates, even if they can't meet in person, can participate online in what many expect to be a historic legislative meeting.

#### Keep this 2021 meeting in your prayers!



#### MONTHLY LOOSE CHANGE PROJECT

September's Loose Change Project is Trinity UMC in East St. Louis/Washington Park. The ministry of the church has expanded to provide worship services, VBS, and a food pantry to the growing Hispanic Community. The need is greater than the resources of the local church which is why we help. There is a dedicated membership and a strong youth program at both sites. May God bless and multiply your gifts!



Just a quick reminder... during this time when you may or may not be able to join our in-person services there are still ways to send your tithes & offerings. You can send it through the <u>US Mail</u>, through <u>Bill Pay</u> with your bank, through our website's <u>Online</u> <u>Giving</u>, and by handing it to us at the <u>door</u> <u>to the building</u>. If you plan to bring it by here, please, call first to make sure we are in the office. Thank you so much!

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER 2020 STEEPLE, Friday, SEPT. 18th!









#### I share with you an excerpt from Leonard Sweet's book, The Greatest Story Never Told.

BELIEVE... We now have a lot of passions — justice, love, peace, simplicity. But our greatest passion is Jesus.

Mennonite theologian Myron S. Augsburger, former president of Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, gave this as his personal credo:

#### I believe in justice.

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But I am not a preacher of the gospel of justice, But the Gospel of Christ who calls us to justice.

#### I believe in love.

But I am not a preacher of the gospel of love, But the Gospel of Christ who calls us to love.

#### I am committed to peace.

But I am not a preacher of the gospel of peace, But the Gospel of Christ who calls us to peace.

#### I believe in the value of the simple life.

But I am not the preacher of the simple life, But of the Gospel of Christ that calls us to the simple life.

Augsburger concluded with this warning: "Let us beware of the ultimate plagiarism of borrowing some great concepts from Jesus, then running off proclaiming these concepts and not sharing the Christ that empowers these concepts."

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen!

#### Rev. Allynn Walker

District Superintendent - Mississippi River District - Illinois Great River Conference - The United Methodist Church



See You at the Pole<sup>™</sup> was inspired by students in a youth group in Burleson, TX, early in 1990. The teenagers felt led to go & pray at night at several area schools during a weekend youth retreat. Their experience was shared with thousands of other youth from across Texas in the form of a challenge in June 1990 at a large conference. More than 56,000 students on 1,200 campuses in Texas and three other states were documented at the first See You at the Pole<sup>™</sup> in September that year. Since 1991, See You at the Pole<sup>™</sup> has grown to God-sized proportions. The movement began to spread to other nations through missionaries from the U.S. Now each year, more than 3 million students from all over the world participate in See You at the Pole<sup>™</sup>. Students in more than 20 countries are responding to God and taking seriously the challenge to pray. **SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 pray for our students and their schools!** 





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## **ALTAR FLOWER INFORMATION:**

September 6: Sponsored by The Dave Schiber Family to say -- Happy Birthday Grandpa Bunt (Don on 9/11)!

September 13: Sponsored by Jerry & Cathy Cameron in honor of their Wedding Anniversary on 9/18!

September 20: Sponsored by Ken Gimmy in memory of Marcella Gimmy. September 27: Sponsored by Beulah Moore in memory of Ben Moore.

October 4: Sponsored by Marjorie Hall in memory of Dennis Hall.

Thank you! And remember to pay your **\$10** sponsorships as the dates come around!



Current month info is posted above. There are <u>still openings</u> on: <u>NOV. 15</u> & <u>DEC. 27</u>! This is a great ministry to honor or remember someone or a special day. Please, let's finish filling in the chart! Sign-up when you come to church, call the church office (259-5310), or send an email to (info@stpaulwired.org) if you are interested. The cost to sponsor flowers is only <u>\$10</u>. Thank you!

# **CALCENTION POSSIBLE UPDATE**

We are continuing to lower the remaining debt to the Endowment Fund on a monthly basis. Please continue your prayers and generous giving as we seek to meet our goal of "no indebtedness." Hopefully, the end of our debt to ourselves will allow us to meet our apportionments to the greater United Methodist Church.

**Many blessings and thanks to all, from your current St. Paul UMC Trustees:** Mike Tappy, Scott Gwaltney, Ian Martin, Noël Schiber, Joe Hoertel, John Hendricks, Karen Challandes (secretary), Jim Herndon (chairman), and Pastor Debra Hoertel

## SCHOOL SUPPLY COLLECTION ----

The Outreach Ministry Team thanks you for giving!!



### ST. PAUL UMC PHONE TREE, "OTTO"

Thank you for helping us test our phone tree service, "Otto." Remember to listen to any message that comes to you this way if it gets recorded on an answering machine or on voice mail. It will explain its purpose!





#### 2020 Annual Conference meets virtually

#### **By Paul Black**

**SPRINGFIELD –** The Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference gathered online for its first ever virtual annual conference session on Aug. 15. The theme of the single-day gathering with a two-hour clergy session and a three-hour plenary session was *Let's Get Fired Up: On Holy Ground.* 

Despite the limitations brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, conferees were able to worship and gather for Christian conferencing. IGRC Communications collaborated to produce a hybrid, part-live, part-recorded Annual Conference. Worship leader Cynthia Wilson provided music for both the opening and closing worship. Music was also provided by several music groups of Pekin Grace UMC. Attendees gathered virtually via Zoom web conferencing or by attending one of the 13 remote locations throughout the annual conference. Slightly more than **1,022 attended annual conference from home** and another **166 attended through one of the remote sites** and voted manually with marshals reporting vote totals via text messaging to the Annual Conference secretarial staff who aggregated the vote totals.

Leading up to the single-day conference, services were aired recognizing 31 retirees with a combined 868 years of service was held Aug. 10; the Cabinet Address on Aug. 11; A Memorial Service remembering clergy, clergy spouses and lay members to annual conference that had passed away in the previous year and remembrance of 10 congregations with a combined 1,561 years of ministry that have completed their mission – Center UMC; Claremont UMC; Dix UMC; LaHarpe UMC, Lawrenceville Otterbein UMC; New Salem UMC; Ohio Chapel UMC; Orange Chapel UMC; Tiskilwa UMC; and Vermont UMC – on Aug. 12; and Bishop Frank J. Beard's Episcopal Address on Aug. 13.

The Annual Conference approved a 2021 budget of \$11,206,875 – a reduction of 7.38 percent. While budgets have been relatively flat over the past 10 years, the total returns the spending level to 2014 levels. The \$893,033 reduction comes on the heels of apportionment collections of 88 percent in 2019, down from 95 percent in 2018. The Conference ended 2019 with a \$276,000 deficit which was addressed by using reserves of previous years' surpluses.

This year, the Conference provided 312 congregations a forgivable loan during the pandemic at a cost of just over \$1 million. The amounts were based upon apportionments paid in the three previous years and the percentage of apportionments paid in 2020 will determine the percentage of forgiveness to the loans. The conference also provided funds for 150 food ministries at a cost of \$75,000 and 72 micro-grants to enhance technology in congregations.

Legislatively, the conference announced that the health insurance allowance paid to full-time pastors will remain at \$17,500 for 2020. The conference also approved a 2.1 percent increase to its minimum salaries. In 2021, the salaries will go to \$45,290 for clergy in full connection, associate members and provisional elders; and \$41,560 for full-time local pastors.

Retirees under the pre-1982 pension plan will see a 2 percent increase to \$810 per active service year in 2021.

The Conference approved a transportation procedure and language regarding cyberbullying recommended by the Bishop's Task Force on Relational Ethics as an addition to the conference's Abuse Prevention Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The Conference also remembered the ministry of MacMurray College which closed its doors in May after 174 years as a college affiliated with The United Methodist Church.

The Clergy Session approved the election of one associate member, nine elders in full connection, one deacon in full connection. They also approved the commissioning of four provisional elders, one provisional deacon; and celebrated the graduation of four local pastors from Course of Study.

Membership stands at 115,959 in 2019, down 2,722 (2.3 percent) from 2018. Average worship attendance is 49,270, down 2,426 (4.7 percent). Church school attendance stands at 16,206, down 840. The 2021 Annual Conference will be held June 10-12, 2021, at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, IL.



#### Annual Coat & Shoe Collection - Redone!

For several years we have collected new & used, coats & shoes for the Riverbend Head Start & Family Services families. We begin this in the fall... BUT this year the general guidelines they have given us have changed! Because of COVID-19 they are unable to receive physical coats or shoes from us. They have been asked to receive only monetary gifts and they will use all of that to buy online the coats or shoes that are needed. For us the collection will go from October to Early-November. We ask that if you can, please add a gift to the Riverbend Head Start & Family Services in with your tithe and offerings. Mark on the front of your offering envelope what amount we should direct to them for this annual collection! Thank you so much in advance! Call the church with any questions! -OUTREACH MINISTRY TEAM



Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life,

which is never not now. And that's a revelation for some people: to realize that your life is only ever now.

**Eckhart** Tolle

