



The BEACON

The Official Newsletter of Christ Church United Church of Christ, Des Plaines, Illinois
An Open & Affirming WISE for mental health congregation

Volume II, Issue VII

August 2025

From The Pastor's Desk: Highways, Stairways, and the Work of Justice

"BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT MERELY HEARERS."

— JAMES 1:22

Dear Beloved Community,

A few days ago, a church member sent me an email filled with memes—some lighthearted, others surprisingly honest. One especially stuck with me:

"The fact that there's a highway to hell and only a stairway to heaven says a lot about anticipated traffic numbers."

Another read:

"Jesus is coming. Look busy."

At first, I laughed. But then I thought more deeply. These two go hand in hand in today's world. We are, indeed, *busy*—but not always in ways that reflect what Jesus actually calls us to do.

We live in a time when injustice is everywhere: a genocide continues against the Palestinian people; xenophobia and racism are resurging; and people still use Christianity as a weapon to exclude, ostracize, or control. And too often, we remain on the sidelines. We tell ourselves, "*It's complicated*," or "*I don't want to make it worse by getting involved*." But here's the thing: **Jesus did get involved**. And we know how that ended. He got involved anyway—out of love for the whole world.

The world teaches us to care only when something affects *us*. But faith calls us to care for others—especially the most vulnerable—whether it benefits us or not. We cannot wait until injustice reaches our doorstep. We must step off the wide highway of fear and indifference, and take the narrow stairway of love, sacrifice, and solidarity.

And let's be honest: today, it's not just that the stairway to heaven is narrow. It's that no one wants to take the stairs anymore. We all want the elevator. We want comfort without commitment. Salvation without service. If the rapture happened today, that meme might prove painfully accurate. The highway would be jammed. The stairway would be nearly empty.

But it doesn't have to be that way. We are people of resurrection. People of courage. People of *hope*. So let's not just *look* busy. Let's be busy—with compassion, justice, mercy, and truth.

In faith and action,

Rev. Gilbert



In this newsletter you can expect:

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Nourishment Through Scripture

For all those who are following the Scripture lessons used during the Sunday Worship Services, here are the August 2025 Common Lectionary readings:

August 3: Matthew 6:26-29

August 10: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20; Heb 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

August 17: Isaiah 5:1-7; Heb 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56

August 24: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Heb 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

August 31: Jeremiah 2:4-13; Heb 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14



Pastor's Office Hours:

Sundays: By Appt after worship.

Mondays: Phone, Video, or Appt.

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 10 am - 3 pm*

Thursdays: By Appt.

Sabbath: Fridays and Saturdays

**Can schedule later appointments on a case-by-case basis. For emergencies, call the pastor on his cell: 224-250-9898*

Finance Manager's Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Administrative Assistant's Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 9 am - 3 pm

STAFF MEETING: Tuesdays 10 am - 12 pm

The office phone is not answered.

COMMUNITY BACKPACK PROGRAM

Suggested items - please, no peanut based snacks and no glass jars!

- Single-serve breakfast cereal
- Instant oatmeal packets
- Pancake mix (add water variety)
- Canned red beans
- One-pound bags of rice
- Pasta and pasta sauce (in cans or plastic jars)



- Canned tuna, beef or chicken
- Peanut butter and jelly (in plastic jars)
- Fruit cups, pudding cups, fruit snacks
- Individually wrapped snacks and chips
- Canned pasta (ravioli, beef-a-Roni, stew, or chili)
- Canned soup

Giving

Did you know our church offers online giving and text-to-give? They're easy to use and secure! You can give a gift of support online at <https://bit.ly/ChristChurchUCCGive> or give via text message by texting the amount you would like to give to 847-750-3007.



Kindness is free.
Let's sprinkle that stuff everywhere!



SUNDAY CHURCH MINISTRIES

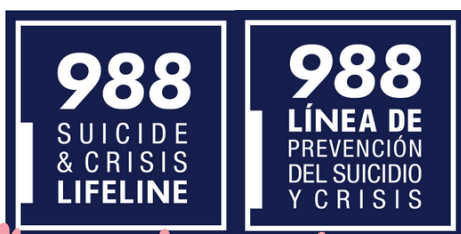
	<u>Liturgist/Lector</u>	<u>Council Greeter</u>	<u>Streaming Coordinator</u>
August 3		Bob Neil	Mandy O'Donnell
August 10	Jacob Guerra-Martinez	Holly Schmidt	Judy Rosedale
August 17	Laura Hallberg	Mandy O'Donnell	Mandy O'Donnell
August 24	Megan Shipp	Laura Hallberg	Judy Rosedale
August 31	Kyle Speer	Judy Rosedale	Mandy O'Donnell



Ushers



August 3	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
August 10	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat, Rahsaan Strode, Jr
August 17	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
August 24	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat, Rahsaan Strode, Jr
August 31	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick



**JUNE & JULY'S AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE:**
55±

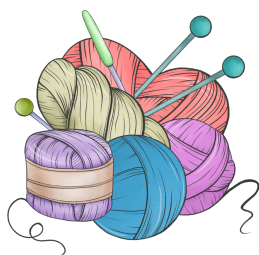


FINANCIAL REPORT

Christ Church UCC Des Plaines Statement of Financial Activity

June 29 through July 26, 2025

	Week of Jun 29, 25	Week of Jul 6, 25	Week of Jul 13, 25	Week of Jul 20, 25	TOTAL
▼ Ordinary Income/Expe...					
▶ Income ▶	5,642.50 ◀	1,172.25	742.05	10,639.00	18,195.80
Gross Profit					
▶ Expense	12,690.69	4,708.07	440.45	3,490.13	21,329.34
Net Ordinary Income	-7,048.19	-3,535.82	301.60	7,148.87	-3,133.54



Lets Get Involved!

GET IT TOGETHER: Tiny Toes & Big Hearts! Our Get It Together group crafted blankets, hats & booties for Project Baby Blanket! They'll bring a little love to NICU babies. Can you crochet or knit? Consider joining our group! The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month in the lounge. *The next meetings will be on June 18th and August 20th, from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.*

NOTABLES: The Notables will meet again to prepare for the coming busy season. As always, in Wobbe Hall from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Contact Kyle Speer for more details.



MISSION COMMITTEE: On the first Sunday of every month, we collect food for the Self-Help Closet and Pantry of Des Plaines. The Red Barrels will be in the narthex.

Please, no expired food; here are a few suggestions:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| • Ketchup | • Body wash | • Men's, Women's, and children's all-sizes underwear |
| • Mustard | • Shampoo | • Ensure, Boost, Glucerna (generic ok) |
| • Mayonnaise | • Dish soap | • Canned dinners (hash, chili) |
| • Pasta sauce (plain) | • Laundry detergent | • Canned fruit |
| • Flour | • Paper towels | • Peanut butter |
| • Sugar | • Dog food (canned and dry) | • Jelly or jam |
| • Instant coffee | • Cooking oil | |
| • Juice (large bottles or boxed) | | |
| • Breakfast cereal (chocolate if possible) | | |
| • New or like-new clean bed linens and towels | | |



Please bring clean, dry plastic grocery bags. Thank you everyone for all your help.

Men's Lunch:

Next meeting is on Monday, **August 11th at 11:45 am.**

Sunrise Grill: 1930 E Touhy Ave, Des Plaines, IL 60018



Women's Breakfast:

Next meeting is on Tuesday, **August 12th at 9 am.**

Mrs. V's Restaurant: 1640 S River Rd, Des Plaines, IL 60018

LIBRARY



NEW BOOKS IN THE LITTLE LIBRARY!

Looking for a good read? Thanks to our dedicated Faith Forward Commission, our Little Library is stocked with various books for all ages. Each book has been carefully selected and stamped with our library stamp.

Want to contribute? Please hand your book donations to a Commission member. Remember, only pre-approved books will be stamped.

Christ Church Council Meeting May 2025

Call to Order: 6:56 pm

Roll Call: Judy Rosedale, Mandy O'Donnell, Holly Schmidt, Steve Bay, George Bielat, Bob Niel, Laura Hallberg, Pastor Gilbert

Prayer: Judy

Review of April 9, 2025 Council Minutes:

Motion and second to approve the April 9, 2025, minutes as sent out. The motion passed.

Review of the April Financial Report

Motion to approve the April 2025 Financial report as presented. The motion passed.

Pastor's Report**Worship & Arts:**

- Regular Worship services – Seven (7)
 - Includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter

Faith Forward Commission | Christian Education

- Two (2) Lent Book Study sessions
- Three Confirmation Classes
 - Class to learn Auschwitz through a virtual tour

Pastoral Care:

- Welcome three new members: John & Maggie LaMarche and Jennifer Ventrella
- Roy Sove Memorial Service and interment of ashes in the Memorial Garden
- Attended Dolores Tomscheck's Memorial Service
- Pastoral contact (pastoral care-related calls/texts, emails, in-person visits, greeting cards) = 42±
- Discretionary Fund: Not included in last month's report (all distributions are documented and held in confidentiality): supported three households in crisis.
- In the last month we received a \$900 donation to offset the Valentine Concert
- Received a \$2500 donation from the Frank & Dolores Crobett Charitable Fund
 - \$1000 was placed into the ONA/WISE Committee Fund
 - \$1500 was allocated to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to help cover the cost of secular therapy sessions for individuals in need and are unable to afford care. These funds make it possible to connect people with the professional support they deserve during difficult times.

Administrative/Personnel:

- Staff Meeting – 7 (includes w/maintenance technician on Sundays)
- Continue to co-manage all social media; updated website
- 6 committee meeting(s)
- Vision Committee continues to meet and explore options for the next chapter of our church's ministry.
- Both Leslie and Hana will depart at the end of the month their celebration will be held on Sunday May 18th.
- Music Director candidates will begin the interview process soon.
- Bobby Jo Valentine concert was a success with nearly 40 people in attendance.

Wider UCC & DP Community Meetings/Presentations/Events:

- DP Alliance Clergy Meeting
- City Hall Community Assessment Discussion
- Met with employees of the city including PD Chief Anderson

- Attended Clean Up-Give Back Earth Day clean up at Chippewa Woods
- Hosted meeting for the community Pride celebration in partnership with Speak DP Meeting & DP Clergy Alliance

Committee Reports

Finance Committee:

- The committee has made changes to how the reports will look and be delivered. The reports will be delayed a month for a full view. EX: In May's meeting the March financials will be share to display for the full month of March. Additional changes may come after the migration of our QuickBooks to the cloud is complete.

Outreach Committee:

- The Outreach Committee met on May 5 to finalize plans for our next event on May 27 at 7 pm. We will be holding a book chat at the Des Plaines Public Library featuring a book by Denise R. Collins called "the Angel of the West Side". The author will present her book and then take questions and comments from attendees. The story focuses on the impact of small actions that can have a big community impact. This will be followed by a Zoom presentation of June 17 at 7 pm.
- A second presentation at the Des Plaines Library will be held on June 10 at 7pm with Rita Barth will be speaking about Little Libraries in Des Plaines.
- The next meeting o the Outreach Committee will be on May 28 at 5:15 pm.

Building Committee:

- Our maintenance technician continues to make small fixes around the building.

Faith Forward Commission:

- Scholarship applications were due May 11 – 2 education scholarships and 5 camp scholarships were approved
- Beginning preparations for confirmation / children's day / scholarship Sunday
- Survey sent out to parents for feedback on Faith Forward Adventures and to gauge interest for a summer program

ONA Wise Committee:

- Mental Health Sunday, May 18 – Lay leader will share their story in lieu of a sermon
- Companionship Training via Zoom for May 20 & 21, 6 pm – 8 pm. Led by Rev. Gilbert.
- Participation in planning and executing the Community Pride Celebration, June 7
- Pride Sunday, June 29

Missions:

- The Mission Committee would like to thank the Congregation for supporting out Backpack Easter Program. People brought snacks, candy and socks to brighten the holiday. You also have supported "Tarts & Bars" on Sunday May 11 and brought Pop Tarts and Granola bars to again support the Backpack Program. Again, we want to Thank You for your continued support. All donations are appreciated.

Memorial Garden:

- Roy Sove's ashes were interred in the garden
- Barbara Nix continues to care for the garden. If anyone is interested in helping her, please reach out to her.

Unfinished Business

- Community Pride Celebration Update – moving along for a good celebration. 20+ outside groups participating
- QuickBooks transition to the cloud is in progress. Kyle will meet with Keith for training and the transition
- Music Director search in progress. Have received 5 applicants and have 2 interviews set up on May 22.

New Business:

- The Vision Committee Progress
- Met yesterday – May 13 and meeting bi-weekly.
- Will share an update at a Sunday service
- Request from Pastor Gilbert to use the Christ Church address to register his non-profit that he is working on starting. It is not yet registered and still in the concept phase – moving to the next step. A motion was made and seconded to approve him using the church address; approved.

Motion to provide up to \$3k to migrate from Microsoft Office back to Google made, seconded and passed.

Motion to adjourn at 7:42pm passed.

3 of 3

OUTREACH COMMITTEE PRESENTS

PRAISE & HARMONY: A SUMMER MUSIC SERIES

Sunday, August 31st at 9:30am**Charles Payette**

Charles studied horn with Philip Farkas at Indiana University and has been an active performer in the Chicago area for many years. He has extensive experience in brass and chamber ensembles and performs regularly with groups including the Northbrook Symphony, Cinque Venti Wind Quintet, Festival City Symphony, and Chicago Metropolitan Brass Ensemble. A sought-after freelance musician, Charles recently soloed with the Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale and spends summers with the Lakeside Symphony in Ohio.

**CHRIST CHURCH**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An open & affirming WISE for mental health congregation.

JOIN US FOR OUR RALLY DAY!

**SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 7**

MORE INFORMATION TO COME

Bring a friend or
neighbor!



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

PRI





BRATION
DE!

JUNE 7, 2025



INTERGENERATIONAL Bowling

JULY 27, 2025



FAITH FORWARD ADVENTURES



growing in
faith together





CHRIST CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An open & affirming WISE for mental health congregation.

Church in the Park



Get ready for our annual worship service and picnic at Lake Opeka—plus fun activities for the kids!



Sunday, August 3, 2025



10 AM - Worship Service



Optimist Pavilion Lake Opeka

We'll have grilled & fried chicken! Bring a side or dessert to share. Sign-up sheet for dishes is available in the office.







CHRIST CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An open & affirming WISE for mental health congregation.

SUMMER YOUTH ACTIVITIES

FAITH FORWARD ADVENTURES

growing in faith together

Get ready for a summer of fun! Faith Forward Commission invites all youth to join us for special activities that spark creativity, connection, and community. (During 9:30-10:30 AM worship service unless noted otherwise)

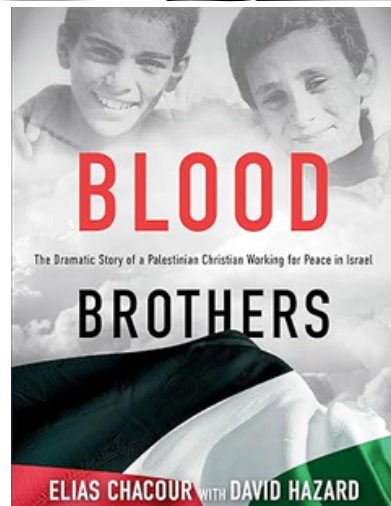
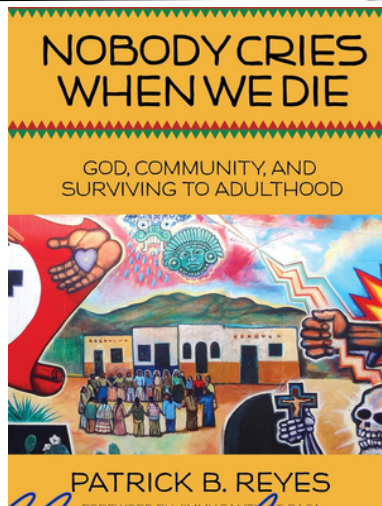
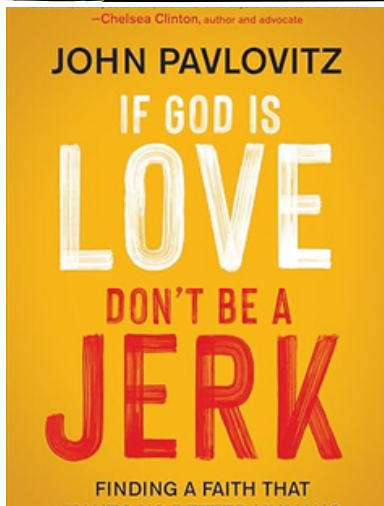
ACTIVITIES:

 **June 29 – Movie Day**
Join us in Wobbe Hall for a fun, family-friendly movie and snacks

 **July 27 – Intergenerational Bowling (after service)**
All are welcome for an intergenerational game. Meet us at River Rand Bowling for some strikes, spares, and summertime fun. RSVP: <https://bit.ly/July27Bowling> or sign-up sheet available in the office.

 **August 3 – Worship in the Park & Picnic (9:30am)**
Enjoy a joyful outdoor service and a picnic—plus lawn games for the kids. There will be a splash pad!

 **August 24 – Board Games**
Wrap up the summer with classic games, laughter, and connection



Fall Book Series

Join Us for Our August–October Book Series: Stories of Faith, Justice, and Resilience

You are warmly invited to a special monthly book discussion series this fall, hosted in the Lounge. From August through October, we'll gather to explore powerful books that share real stories of grief, identity, resilience, and justice. Together, we'll reflect on what it means to walk with one another in compassion and faith, and how we can be agents of love in a hurting world.

Whether you've read every page or just want to listen in, come as you are—everyone is welcome.

Dates & Time: Saturdays, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM in the Lounge

- **August 16:** *If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk* by John Pavlovitz
- **September 20:** *Nobody Cries When We Die* by Patrick Reyes
- **October 18:** *Blood Brothers* by Elias Chacour

August: *If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*

Pastor and author John Pavlovitz challenges us to rethink how our faith shapes the way we treat others. With honesty and humor, he invites us to move beyond fear and exclusion—and to embrace a life rooted in love, humility, and compassion. A powerful read for anyone yearning for an authentic, justice-centered faith.

September: *Nobody Cries When We Die*

Patrick Reyes weaves his Latinx experience into a bold reflection on survival, purpose, and reclaiming our voices. A call to honor our stories, lift up marginalized lives, and work toward liberation and community.

October: *Blood Brothers*

This deeply moving memoir by Palestinian Christian priest Elias Chacour traces his journey through conflict and displacement in Galilee. It's a testament to faith, forgiveness, and the tireless pursuit of peace and justice.

Come for one discussion or all three—this is a space for honest conversation, shared learning, and spiritual growth.

Memorials/Honors for June & July

In memory of Jean Henschke, *by Rita Barth*

In honor of Hunter & Rogan Busse's June birthdays, *by Nancy Seils*

Bruce & Hope 57 years, *by Bruce & Hope Tschappat*

In memory of Jean Henschke, *by Bud & Elaine Hudson*

In memory of my dad and our grandpa, on Father's Day and the anniversary of his passing,

June 17, *by Rev. Gilbert Martinez, Nate, Jazmyn, & Alexa*

For Father's Day, in memory of Bob, *by Cathy Chappell*

In memory of our Dads, Emil Butenschoen and Walter Hudson & our grandparents,

by Bud & Elaine Hudson

Happy Birthday

4 - Dorian Schrader

6 - Hana Fujisaki

7 - Bruce Tschappat

8 - Jezzle Patterson

13 - Josh Kelso

13 - Peggy Wajda

18 - Monica Kulaga

18 - Marilyn McCown

23 - John LaMarche

23 - Debbie Barnhart

24 - Ed Cheng

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

14 - Don & Judy Rosedale

29 - David & Peggy Wajda


A purple and yellow backpack is shown open, filled with school supplies including a calculator, pencils, and notebooks. The background is a light purple with various school-related icons like a soccer ball, a clock, a lightbulb, and mathematical formulas like E=mc^2 and A+.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17
9:30 AM

Don't forget to bring your backpacks!

COMING UP IN AUGUST

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Time</u>
3	Annual Lake Opeka Worship & Picnic	Optimist Pavilion at Lake Opeka	10 am
4	Finance Committee Meeting	Lounge	7 pm
11	Men's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	9:30 am
12	Women's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	11:45 am
	Vision Task Force	Lounge	1:30 pm
13	Potluck	Wobbe Hall	6 pm
	Council Meeting	Lounge	7 pm
16	Fall Book Series (<i>See insert for titles</i>)	Lounge	10 am - 12 pm
17	Blessings of the Backpacks	Sanctuary	9:30 am
18	Faith Forward Commission & Outreach	Lounge	5:15 pm
	Joint Meeting		
20	Get It Together	Lounge	10 am - 12 pm
24	Faith Forward Commission Summer Youth	Wobbe Hall	9:30 am
	Activities (Board Games)		
31	Outreach Summer Series Guest Musician	Sanctuary	9:30 am

PLASTIC RECYCLING CHALLENGE

We're off to a fantastic start in our plastic recycling challenge, a joint effort between Trinity Lutheran ELCA, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, and First United Methodist Church. A total of 359 pounds have been collected for the month of July. To reach our goal of **1,000 pounds by June 30, 2026**, we need 641 pounds! Please continue bringing in your recyclable plastics to help us earn a bench for the Self-Help Closet & Pantry of Des Plaines!



POTLUCK: Come and bring a dish for the potluck dinner and join us for fellowship. The dinner will be at 6:00 pm on **Wednesday, August 13th**. The theme is Pizza Night. Join us for fellowship.

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." - 3 John 1:2

*Please keep the church office informed when you hear of someone needing prayers. During the months of **June & July**, our thoughts and prayers were with:*

Marion Meseth*
Dawn Mashek
Linda Steckel*
Jack Storm
Sue Prunty
Marilyn Hoover*

Marilyn McCown
Dorothy Zemke*
Kelly Roberts
Helen Harney
Hope & Bruce Tschappat*
George Bielat

Homebound*
Our Country
Ukraine, Lebanon, Palestinian,
and Israeli citizens
Documented & Undocumented
Immigrants



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Tommie Jordan, Custodian

Emanuel Alvarez, Maintenance Technician

Hana Fujisaki, Organist

The Beacon is the official newsletter of Christ Church United Church of Christ. Edited by church staff. Published monthly, August through June.

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988

Suicide and Crisis

Lifeline

Call or Text

