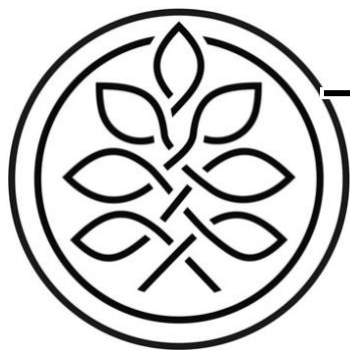




Please join us for worship.
Midway Kids: 10:30
Worship: 10:30

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ministries & Missions	2
Birthdays, Give Back Day	3
Getting To Know You	4
On the Rez	5
Clay Target Shoot	6
What Is Our Why? continued)	7
Church Choir	8
August Fun Night	9
Kitchen Cabinet	10
Twice Blessed Thank You	11
The Back Row	12

Calendar

Sundays —

Women's Bible Study 5:00 p.m.
Midway Students 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Mondays — 6:30 p.m.

Boy Scout Troop 68

Tuesdays —

Prayer Ministry — 1:30 p.m.
Men's Bible Study 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays —

Midway Hotel Lunch — Noon
Choir Rehearsal — 6:29 p.m.

Thursdays — 9-4:00

Sewcial open sewing
Yoga at 9:00
1st and 3rd — Twice Blessed
Open Noon to 5 p.m.

Tuesday, August 11

Second Tuesday Lunch — Noon
Prayer Ministry — 1:30

Sundays, Aug. 9—Sept. 6

Special Prayer Service
9:00 a.m.

Monday, August 24

Gorgeous Girls — 11:00 a.m.
Sophia's
3910 Peachtree Drive

Midway Locust Grove Church

Locust Leaves



Volume 39
Number 8
August 2026

"What Is Our Why?"

As we draw closer to Sunday, September 13, more and more of us are experiencing some anxiety and uncertainty about moving to two worship services I believe that it completely natural. Change, even good and necessary change, can be uncomfortable.

As we have communicated for several months, this decision was not entered into lightly. Last year, our Administrative Ministry Council spent more than eight months in a careful listening process. We listened to our congregation in the spring. We listened to our neighbors in the fall. And throughout those eight months, we listened for the voice of God through prayer, the Ignatian Examen, and personal journaling.

That season of listening revealed many things, including what we believe is the next faithful step forward for our congregation.

Over the past several weeks, I have heard comments such as, "So, we're really doing this?" and "Everything is going so well. Why are we changing things now?"

In brief: Yes, we are really doing this. And I would like to clearly communicate why.

Since June 2020, the Lord has been remarkably faithful in leading, guiding, and blessing our work. Throughout that time, our Administrative Ministry Council and Worship Ministry Team have worked in partnership with the Holy Spirit to make thoughtful and incremental changes to our Sunday morning worship service. Over the years, those changes have helped strengthen our Sunday morning worship and contributed to growth in attendance and participation.

We have continued to refine our current worship service, and we are genuinely pleased with what it has become. Our traditional service is healthy, meaningful, and fruitful. At the same time, our church has reached a stage of plateau. Simply put, we believe we have done about all we can do within our current model and offering.

That does not mean anything is wrong. It means it may be time to make room for something new.

The church exists to gather people through the grace of Jesus, help them grow in the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of Jesus, and send them into the world to help others do the same. We must always keep one eye on discipling and equipping those already within the church while also looking for faithful ways to reach those who are still outside.

The truth is that we all have friends, relatives, coworkers, and neighbors who are not currently connected to any local church. If our existing worship offering were naturally going to draw many of them into our congregation, it likely would have by now.

Which brings us to our "why."

We are creating a second worship opportunity because we want to reach people who are not presently being reached. We are not abandoning what has been fruitful. We are building upon it.

Our prayer is that two things will happen.

First, our traditional service will continue to be a strong and steady backbone for our congregation at 11:00 a.m. Our current traditional worship offering is not being taken away or changed. The thought process is simple: If it is not broken, do not fix it. We are grateful for the traditions, music, prayers, relationships, and rhythms that have formed our congregation, and we will continue to honor them.

Second, we will add a new worship opportunity at 9:00 a.m. in the hope of reaching new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want to welcome them, worship alongside them, and walk with them on the narrow path that leads to life and freedom in Christ.



Beyond
the Pulpit

**Pastor
Ben Lee**

(Continued on Page 7)

Ministries & Missions



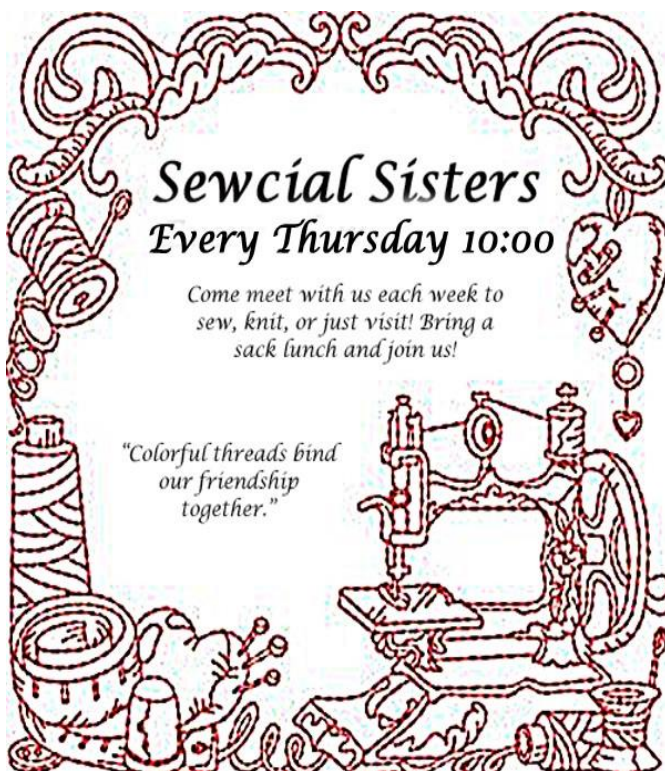
GORGEOUS GIRLS **August lunch stops at** **Sophia's.** **See you Monday, Aug. 24.**

Following the resumption of luncheons for the Gorgeous Girls, the next scheduled luncheon will be Monday, August 24, at 11:00 a.m. at Sophia's. Meet at the church at 10:30 if you want to carpool.

Sophia's is an upscale Italian-inspired restaurant known for its globally influenced cuisine, a large wine selection, and a sophisticated atmosphere.

It is located at 3910 Peachtree Drive in Columbia, just south of Nifong Blvd.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Palmer at capalmer48@gmail.com.



TREASURY NOTES



By Kelley Frink

The Church continues to be in a strong financial position. Our total budget for the year is \$400,000, or around \$33,000 in contributions per month. Through July we are averaging around \$10,000 per month, putting us ahead of our 2026 budget. If you have any questions, please contact church treasurer Kelley Frink at Kelley.m.frink@gmail.com or by phone at 573-819-6785

*God promises
a safe landing,
not a calm passage.*

Join us for **Second Tuesday Lunch**

August 11
Noon in the
Fellowship
Hall.
Bring a dish
and a friend .



Happy Birthday

August 2026

If someone's name does not appear here and they do have a birthday this month, please let us know by email and we will update our records.

2 Louise Stanley
2 Marj Reed
2 Jessica Kempf
3 Sheldon Toepke
4 Beth Hager H. Prado
5 Margaret Butzlaff
5 Paige Hovis

5 Patrick Persinger
6 Shirley Forinash
7 Jayden O'Neal
10 Addie Cunningham
11 Enzo Le
17 Barry Stoll
19 Addison Frink
22 Barb Harville

24 Johanna Roberts
25 Raylin Burkart
26 Dalli O'Neal
26 Mike Thomas
28 Joe Boillot
29 Larry Henneke
30 Tony Martin

Give Back Day at the Food Bank



A huge thank you to those that volunteered at our Give Back Day at the Food Bank on Saturday, July 18th. The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri acquires and distributes millions of pounds of food to a network of over 145 partner agencies, including pantries, soup kitchens and schools across 32 counties.

We had 10 volunteers from our church join a few more volunteers and we packaged 918 POUNDS of cereal in 2 hours! It was fun meeting new people and catching up with friends from church.

Please plan on joining us for our next Give

Back Day with Habitat for Humanity on **Saturday, Sept. 26th from 12:30-4pm**. This will be our first time to volunteer with this organization and I'm looking forward to serving in such a tangible way. We will get to work alongside the future homeowners and other volunteers doing various projects to help complete the building of their home. Be on the lookout for more details in the Monday Morning Map. Contact person: Leslie Brown 573-355-3978 or brownie1262@hotmail.com



Leslie Brown
Ministry Chair

Watch for details in the Fellowship Hall, or contact Leslie Brown at 573-0355-3978 or by email at brownie1262@hotmail.com.



Getting to know you

With the recent and continuing growth of our congregation, it seemed a good idea to revive a feature from earlier years of Locust Leaves. We will feature someone in each month's issue, alternating new and longtime members. Thanks to LeeAnn Martin for coordinating the series.

Belinda Thompson

Today is August 4, 2026.

I am Belinda Thompson. I was born November 19, 1958. I live on High Street in Boonville, MO. I began visiting Locust Grove Church in August of 2022, and joined in October of 2022. I was fascinated to see a church meeting outdoors in lawn chairs, with everyone dressed comfortably and even people riding up to attend on horseback!

I wouldn't have felt more at home anywhere else. The Choir Director (JJ) greeted me at the door and gave me a tour, and welcomed me with such warmth I was hooked! The authentic and sincere education from the Word of God, and the warm greetings by Locust Grove attendees every Sunday kept me coming!

I am divorced. I have three amazing children, Jeremiah Metzen and his wife Ashley, two step-granddaughters (ka & Darwin), and granddaughter Josie Rose who will be two this October; Joshua Metzen (two grandcats); and Jolene Metzen & fiancé Matthew Ludden (with 3 granddogs and a grandcat). Their ages respectively are 41, 39, & 37. All of my children are WONDERFUL answers to prayer. I have truly been blessed. All live in the Columbia area and provide lots of joy and love. I am allergic to cats, so of course, ALL my children have



By
Belinda
Thompson

cats! (I am welcome to visit...not planning to stay!)

I am a retired teacher. I taught Government and History. I have a bachelor's degree in History, and a Master's degree in teaching. I have taught every grade from preschool to High School, and more subject areas than can be listed here. One of my greatest Joys (after my children, of course) is music. I have played guitar since High School and Piano since College. My brothers and I played in a band with my Mother in various locations around the State of Missouri. I love singing and music is an essential part of my life.

My early years were heavily influenced by my paternal Grandmother and Grandfather. I turned my life over to Jesus at an early elementary age, and was baptized at 12 years old in the Big Piney River. After I moved to Columbia in 1970 I played guitar for the guitar mass at Sacred Heart Church for four years. I served on the Board of Christian Chapel Academy in Columbia. While my children were young, I attended Lay-Speaker training at Boonville United Methodist Church and was the Youth Pastor of the Armstrong United Methodist Church for several years.

(Continued on page 9)

Our mission “tribe” is gearing up for our annual trek to the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation to work with Remember for a week. It is an immersion experience of work, education and making connections. It is an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Jesus by walking and working alongside our Lakota brothers and sisters while getting to know them and more about their history, humor, pastimes, music, and needs.

During the day we will have the opportunity to work in the community garden, build decks and ramps and build and install bunk beds and outhouses. Because of the extreme temperatures on the reservation, the younger, more limber participants also skirt trailers to improve heating in the winter and cooling in the summer.

During the evenings we have one night of a shared meal with our Lakota friends and artisans, and the opportunity to peruse and purchase arts and crafts. Other evenings are spent with native speakers and demonstrations. There is always ample opportunity for questions and discussions. Native history from their perspective, music, hand games, and culture are some of the topics covered.

The week starts off with a tour of part of the rez and an opportunity to visit Wounded Knee, hearing a somewhat painful narrative of the event from the Lakota perspective. Another day involves an additional tour of other parts of the rez, including a top of the Badlands and the opportunity to walk out to a sacred area called the Sanctuary and meditate.

In September the days are usually warm to hot, and the nights are pleasant to quite chilly. On a rare occasion there may even be an early winter storm. So we take layers of clothing to accommodate the fall conditions at this elevation. We also take clothing appropriate to sand, paint and stain in.

ON THE REZ

With Kathy Hughes

Aug On The Rez

We sleep on the same style bunk beds we build for families, taking our own bedding. We live dormitory style with guys and gals segregated. There is always coffee and hot water for tea available. We are assigned work teams and, like camp, our teams help with meal prep and clean up on a rotating basis.

The most important part of each day is the connections we make. Connections with like-minded volunteers through fellowship at morning hikes to watch the sunrise, meals and down times, and in the workshop and on work sites. And connections,

which can become deep and lasting though the years, with the Lakota we learn from and walk alongside and serve. I am blessed to correspond with three volunteers I have worked with over the years. Typically, on any given trip we reunite with at least one or two volunteers we have met and worked on previous trips.

We usually take offerings of warm coats, hats and gloves and/or school supplies, reading books, new twin bed sheets, blankets or quilts to ease the up-coming demands of life on the rez a bit. Last year we even took a supply of prom dresses.

Two of us, Belinda and Keith, will start September 12 to work for two weeks as volunteer staff. A week later, Marica, Kathy and Kathy's daughter Stephanie and granddaughter Aliana (from Tennessee) will join them as volunteers. Belinda's son Josh may possibly join us also this year.

If you've ever wanted to live and work on a reservation and see the reality of life there on a personal basis, this is a grand opportunity. Mark your calendar for next spring to get on our list and join in our prep for a trip next fall.

Clay Trap Shoot

Trap shooting is a popular clay target sport where participants use a shotgun to shoot at clay discs (pigeons) launched from an underground trap house.

It is also an opportunity for Christian men from Midway Locust Grove and Fayette Faith Family churches to share fellowship, good food, and testimony of their faith.

This year's event was July 29th at Midway Farms in Howard County hosted by the Faith Family men. About a dozen attended from Midway.



What Is Our Why?

(Continued from Page 1)

By moving to two services, we are not losing what we have. We are keeping what we know produces fruit while creating additional space for God to reach people through a different worship expression.

This work has not been easy to this point, and I do not imagine it will suddenly become easy in the coming season. I have told many people who have visited my office that this fall (and probably next spring) may feel more like finger painting than a finely detailed oil painting.

There will be adjustments. There will be things we try that work well and things that need to be reconsidered. We will all need to remain openhanded, openhearted, patient, and flexible as we plant a new service and establish new rhythms as a congregation.

But I am fully convinced that we can do this. Over the past six years, this congregation has walked through challenges far more difficult than adding a second worship service. God has been faithful through every season, and I believe God will be faithful in this one as well. Creating another opportunity to worship (and another doorway through which people might encounter Jesus) should ultimately be a cause for celebration. This work should be surrounded by prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

Will you join our leadership team in praying for this new season?

Pray for both worship services. Pray for those already within our congregation and for those who have not yet found their way here. Pray for our staff, ministry leaders, everyone within our music ministries, and our faithful volunteers. Pray that we will remain aligned with God's will for this historic local church. And above all, pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will usher Midway Locust Grove into its next season of spiritual growth and faithful ministry.

That is our why.

Peace,

Ben

Teagan Groh sings "O, God of Mercy, Hear Our Plea" for special music August 2.





Our choir is a place where voices, faith, and friendship come together. Each week, we have the joy of leading our congregation in worship, offering music that encourages, comforts, and lifts people's spirits.

If you've ever felt the tug to sing—whether you're an experienced vocalist or someone who simply loves hymns—this is a wonderful time to join us.

Rehearsals are welcoming and fun, and you'll be part of a caring group that blesses others and is blessed in return.

Jim Johnson

(Continued from page 4)

Getting to know you, Belinda Thompson

It is only in the last few years I have been able to openly discuss my indigenous ancestry. My grandparents were indigenous. They warned me NOT to discuss my ancestry, and expressed their joy that I was such a pale-skinned person that I would be able to do well in today's society. One of the activities that cemented my love of this church was the missionary trips to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The leader of that effort (Kathy Hughes) has become a treasured sister to me.

I have Cherokee, Shawnee & Osage ancestry, and thanks to the love and support of this congregation, I am no longer ashamed to speak of it. I am grateful, every day, that my Savior has brought me to such a loving Christian family of believers that authentically and enthusiastically love me and grow with me in serving Jesus Christ our King.

Blessing of the Backpacks

As a new school year begins, let's come together to lift up our schools and everyone who learns, leads, teaches, and supports with love and dedication. Join us as we pray for and bless all students, teachers, school staff, and administrators.

If you are headed back to school this fall, we invite you to bring your backpack or work bag with you on Sunday, August 23rd. There is truly no better way to kick off a new school year.

August Fun & Fellowship Night

When: Thursday, August 13 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Midway Golf & Games (5500W. Van Horn
Tavern Road, Columbia, MO 65203)

Join us for free and fun outdoor yard games such as Jenga, Corn Hole, Battleship, Checkers, Connect Four, Two Bocce Ball courts, and more.

You can purchase punch cards for two attractions for our group rate of \$15. Some of the attractions available will be mini golf, go carts, batting cages, medium bucket of driving range balls, etc. You may purchase as many punch cards as you would like.

Food/snacks are available for purchase at the concessions area or at Tavern 44.

Please RSVP by Monday, August 10th so that we can give an estimated head count. This will help them have punch cards ready so you won't have to wait for printing.

For more information and to RSVP, go to <https://forms.gle/ivZDyVqp8zwXoMHK9> or text or mail Shayla Roop at 573-406-4349 or sroop@cpsk12.org.

We hope you can join us for some fun and fellowship! See you there.





It is August and we are in the middle of summer. Gardens are giving us a bounty of produce we can and share. This recipe is a combination of funeral potatoes and chicken casserole that makes a delicious and easy to put together meal that feeds a crowd.

Enjoy! Hope Burkart

Chicken and Potato Casserole

1 30-oz. bag of hash brown potatoes—thawed

3 cups shredded chicken

2 cans cream of chicken soup

2 cups sour cream

1/4 cup dried onion flakes

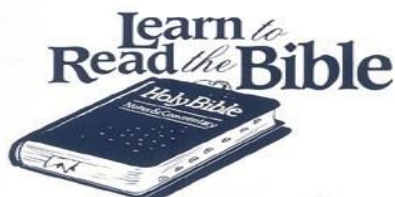
1/2 t salt

1/2 t pepper

Topping: 1c crushed corn flakes or 1 sleeve of Ritz crackers, crushed

4 T melted butter

Directions: Combine all ingredients in large bowl, then pour into a greased 9 x 13 casserole dish. Add toppings. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.



Leslie Durrant, Gary Wrifberg wed June 13 in Woodlandville

Leslie Durrant, former Locust Grove Church member and frequent occupant of the pulpit, and fellow pastor Gary Wrifberg of Grace Fellowship Church in Fayette were married June 13 in Woodlandville United Methodist Church, where Leslie serves as pastor. A 42-year veteran pastor, Gary founded Grace Fellowship and continues to serve after retiring in 2011.



Leslie left her role at Locust Grove where she delivered sermons and wrote her *View from a Pew* column in the monthly newsletter, Locust Leaves. to become a pastor.

The couple have been 3-mile neighbors for years, and both are serious walkers. Their paths crossed at The Arc in Columbia, and they dated for two years before walking together — down the aisle at Woodlandville.

They have retained both their homes and share time at each of them three days every week. Leslie spends the seventh day with her three daughters.



*Basic necessities free of charge
to those temporarily in need*

(Open August 6 & 13)

**Twice
blessed**

*Open 1st & 3rd Thursdays
12:00 – 5:00*

The little white building
on the corner of
Henderson and Locust Grove Church Road

*Dear Midway Locust Grove
Bible School,*

*From the bottom of our hearts,
thank you!*

Your generosity has truly overwhelmed us—in the best possible way. Tub after tub, item after item, your donations for our mission, Twice Blessed, poured in with such joy and abundance that we stopped counting after 700–800 items!

But what we didn't stop noticing was your excitement, your kindness, and your heart for helping others.



You didn't just give supplies—you gave hope.
You didn't just fill tubs—you filled hearts.

Your willingness to go above and beyond reminds us that when we give with love, we reflect the very heart of Christ.



*"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
—Acts 20:35*



*With deep appreciation,
Glenna Johnson & Jill Cook
Twice Blessed*



MIDWAY LOCUST GROVE CHURCH

2600 N. Locust Grove Church Road
Columbia, MO 65202

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Administrative Assistant: Lucy McDade
Church phone: 573-445-4667
Pastor's cell phone: 478-447-4438
Email: mwlocustgrove@gmail.com
Email: blee.mwlocustgrove@gmail.com
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YouTube: mwlocustgrove
Instagram: @mwlocustgrove

***Our Mission:
We exist to
gather in grace,
grow in Christ,
and go share the Gospel.***

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Rocheport@aol.com 573-445-1998



Friendship defined. . .

Saying goodbye to a friend at their graveside is one of those experiences we all would like to avoid. The closer the friendship, the more difficult it is to say goodbye, but the greater are the memories

A few years ago I was invited to join a small conversation group in Columbia. The host, Bob Martin, and one of the members, Johnnie Old, were the definition of friends. They had been stars on the Hickman Kewpies High

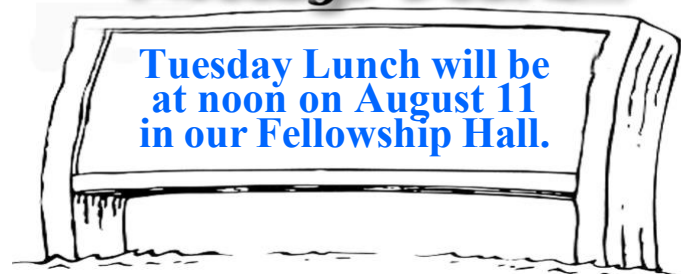
Find the hidden Bible



in this issue.

Volume 39 Issue 8 August 2026

***If we had a
Message Board...***



August 2026

School football team in the 1950s, and rarely missed Wednesday lunch together until Johnnie passed away on July 2 at the home he loved so much.

At the interment of Johnnie's ashes at Columbia's Memorial Park Cemetery, Pastor Bruce Williamson of Fulton's New Hope Baptist quoted a revision of The Lord's Prayer which he has created, called "The Journey to Life everlasting."

I was surprised to learn that I had known Johnnie's wife Shirley for several years as she served as city clerk for Rocheport. Friendships tend to extend themselves.