

ST CHARLES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2026

Gathered in Hope,
Nurtured in Faith,
Sent as Christ's Servants

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The Season in Lent

We have begun our spiritual journey for Lent and it is not too late for you to join us along “The Way” as we journey with Jesus on his path to the cross. If you missed the Ash Wednesday service which marks the beginning of Lent, you can read a copy of Pastor Marilyn’s message from the Narthex or watch the service on our SCPC YouTube channel, which not only will introduce you to the series, but also provide inspiration to participate in it. Beyond worship on Sunday mornings, there are many ways to enrich your Lenten experience. On this page and the next, you will find details about events and ways to serve and you are welcome to participate in any of them. You may call the church office if you have any questions.

Adult Spiritual Formation Class Meets Sundays 9:30 am in ACb

Open to any adult, this class is reading the gospel of Mark and the devotional study, *Meeting Jesus on the Road*, during Lent. As a service project, we are writing notes each week to the staff of peacemaking groups in our own community and beyond.

Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday

Following worship on Easter Sunday, April 5, there will be an Easter egg hunt for all children. It will be held outside, weather permitting, on the area next to the playground. If there is inclement weather, it will be held in Fellowship Hall. All older youth are encouraged to participate in setting it up for the younger kids.



Flowers for Worship on Easter

The blooming cross and potted tulips will add beauty to our worship experience on Easter Sunday, April 5. You may participate by contributing money for the cut flowers that will be placed on the cross Easter Sunday. Come for a time of fellowship, coffee and pastries before worship, and decorate the cross with flowers. Additionally, you may purchase a potted tulip in memory or in honor of a loved one. The tulips will cost \$12 and there is an order form in the Narthex which you can turn in to the office or place in the offering plate on Sundays.

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, March 29, and includes a Maundy Thursday service on Thursday, April 2, at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall. Come for a simple soup supper and participate in a simple liturgy together, including communion. If you are able, please contribute a dessert or bread and/or crackers. This meal and time of worship together will prepare our hearts and minds for remembering the crucifixion of Jesus.

“The Way”

Lent – Easter Worship Series

“You don’t choose a life, you live a life.” – *The Way* movie

“I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” – Isaiah 43:19

The annual season in Lent is a time of reflection, and there is nothing like a pilgrimage to conjure that up. Making intentional journeys has been a ritual of humankind across time and traditions.

Inspired by passages in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads, and pathways of life, on Ash Wednesday, now continuing on Sundays through Easter, along with our Maundy Thursday soup supper Communion service we are traveling our way together through this season via worship, spiritual formation, and devotional pilgrimage opportunities incorporating themes from the movie, *The Way*.

The movie, which is about a father's pilgrimage in honor of his late son on the famed Camino de Santiago in France and Spain, serves as our modern-day inspiration to live the life we've been given to the fullest.

We will have the opportunity to watch *The Way* together as a congregation during our movie afternoon on March 15 at 2 p.m. in our church’s fellowship hall. Attendees are encouraged to bring your own snacks. Quiet activities for children will be available at a table in Fellowship Hall during the movie.

Other devotional pilgrimage opportunities include making use of one of the church’s finger labyrinths displayed in the narthex and/or picking up a paper one to take home for your own devotional reflections; and plans for doing prayer walks around St. Charles and leaving rocks painted by adults, children and youth during Prime Time in February.

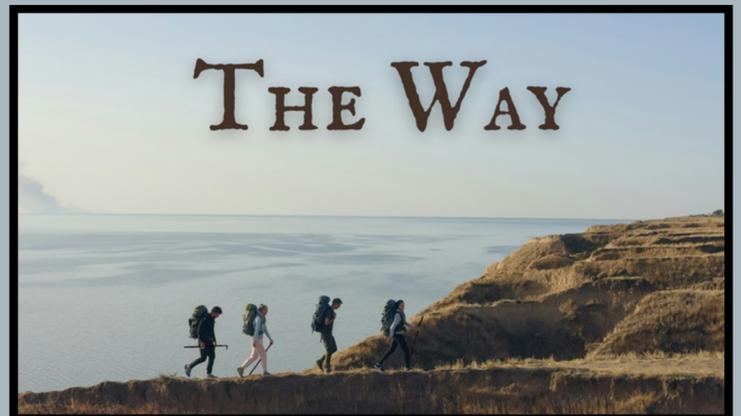
Our congregation also has the FREE opportunity to join via Zoom weekly “Street Wisdom Walkshops” inside your home, around your yard or around your neighborhood led by “The Way” worship series creator Dr. Marcia McFee.

The “Street Wisdom Walkshops” are every Saturday during Lent at 12 Noon central time and may be joined using this Zoom link:

[Street Wisdom Walkshops](#)

For the curious, Dr. McFee provides a sense of the weekly “Street Wisdom Walkshops” via this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ok3swl5QX4I>

We hope you'll join us in one or more ways following “The Way” this Lenten season!



Spring Events for Adults

As a community rooted in growing our connections with each other, there are many groups that you can join to strengthen these relationships and ideas for new groups are forming regularly. You are welcome and encouraged to join any of these diverse groups and you are welcome to call the church office if you have questions about them.

Adult Spiritual Formation Class

Sundays at 9:30 am Adult Classroom B

Led by Kenda Carey & other adult members

This is a small group of adults ranging in age from their 30's -80's, and they welcome any adult to their class on Sunday mornings. They typically study a book of the Bible or a special book of topical study. Currently, they are participating in a Lenten study while reading the book of Mark daily during Lent. The discussion is always rich and led by love, especially in disagreement.

Dinner & Discussion Group

Bi-Monthly on Wednesday evenings

2nd Wednesday: 6-7:30 at the church

4th Wednesday: 6-8 pm at the Smith's home

Led by Marcus & Ruth Smith

On the 2nd Wednesday, this group gathers during Prime Time to share a meal with the kids and a time of discussion afterwards.

On the 4th Wednesday, they gather at the home of Marcus & Ruth Smith, 3108 Bowman Ridge Dr., St. Charles. They share a meal together

with the only requirement being you bring something you already have at home, and discuss their latest book or study.

Currently, they are reading, *Living Into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us*. They meet for social gatherings in the summer. In the few years since this group has been meeting friendships have formed, bonds have deepened, and learning new ways to support the community of St. Charles and beyond.

Women's Fellowship Group

Monthly on the 1st Thursday, 7:00-8:30 pm

Java with Jesus

Led by Jess McMaken

This women's group serves women of all ages. Their time is spent in Bible study, fellowship, and sharing a snack together. This year their study is *Sacred Encounters: The Power & Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke & Acts*. They will welcome any adult woman and you do not have to purchase the Bible study to join the group.

Lunch Bunch

Monthly on the 3rd Wednesday, 11:30 am

Meet at various restaurants in St. Charles

Organized by Sally Stumberg

This is a social group that meets for lunch at restaurants in the St. Charles area. While it consists mostly of retired adults, anyone is welcome to join them in sharing a meal and good conversation together. Their next lunch date is March 3 at Fair Winds at the River's Edge, 600 River's Edge Dr. in St. Charles.

Book Club

Monthly on the 1st Tuesday, 1 pm

Java with Jesus

Led by different members each month

This is a social group of avid readers that love to discuss books. Each member selects a book and leads the discussion for that book. For April, they are reading, *One Perfect Day*, by Lauraine Snelling. In December, they meet for lunch and decide the year's selection of books.

Spring Events for Children & Youth

PRIME TIME

Monthly on Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30 pm, Fellowship Hall

Open to all youth from Kindergarten-6th grade

Bible Study for older youth led by Mary Kay Lyon

Prime Time is a time for kids to participate in recreation activities, Bible study, sharing a meal with adults, and often a service project.

Each session is set around a theme:

March 11 - St. Patrick's Day, wear green & enjoy a meal of fish sticks, mac 'n' cheese, green beans & cupcakes

April 8 -Spring is here! Wear gear for your favorite sports team & enjoy a meal of tacos, corn, applesauce, & cookies & brownies

May 13 - End of the Year party; wear wacky hair & outfits & enjoy a meal of pizza, salad, & assorted cakes

The Prime Time meal team is always looking for volunteers to make dessert. There is sign-up sheet on the kitchen door.

V.A.T. VIDEO GAME-ADDICTED TEENS

Meets monthly on Sunday afternoons following worship

Jonah Smith's house, 3108 Bowman Ridge Dr., St. Charles

This group is open to any teen who loves to play video games.

They meet for lunch and games until 4 pm. Their next meeting

will be Sunday, May 17. and they will not meet in March or April.

Youth Sunday

April 19, Morning Worship, 10:30 am

Our children & youth will lead us in worship this Sunday. Any children or youth that would like to participate is welcome.

Please see pastor Marilyn if you are interested.

Coming this Summer - VBS

Galaxy: Launching Kids on a Mission of God's Love

Date and more details coming soon!

Spiritual Formation Classes

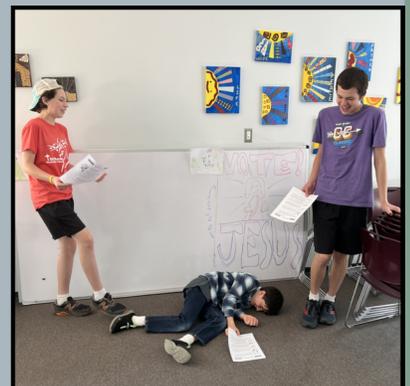
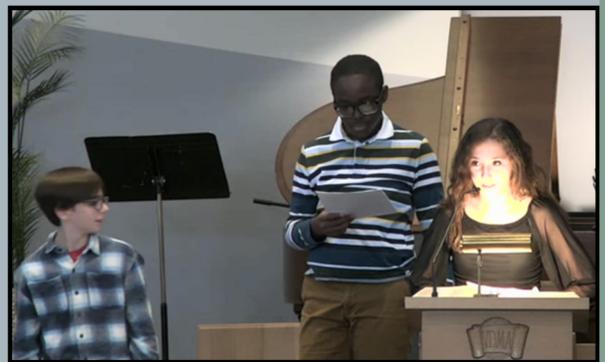
Sundays 9:30 am

Kindergarten-5th Grade, Room 3 - led by

Jess McMaken & Jerry Lyon

6th - 12th Grade, Room 5 - led by Mary Kay Lyon

& Hilary Kelly



Ways to Serve this Spring

From a “once in awhile” commitment to a weekly one, there are several ways to serve and grow your connections within our walls and beyond for the larger St. Charles community. Serving enriches the lives of others and your own.

Welcome Team

Sunday mornings

Meet in the Narthex, at 10:15

A friendly greeting as you come to church can make a difference and set visitors at ease. Sometimes just getting to church is difficult and the Welcome Team is there to greet you, and help you feel at home. But they can't do it without YOU! Consider signing up for one Sunday a month to serve as a greeter. If that is too big a commitment, consider being a sub. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex and there are some dates left. There will be a short Welcome Team training meeting on March 15 immediately following worship.

First Sundays Coffee Hour

First Sunday of the month | Narthex

You asked and we answered. Every first Sunday of the month, we will have coffee and goodies before and after church in the Narthex. Come early, grab a coffee after class, or stay late to visit with friends and get to know new ones. This is a great and simple way for families to serve our church. Your only requirement is to show up at 10:15, bring goodies to share, (if you can), set up the table in the Narthex where supplies will be located, and do a simple clean up afterwards. The early bird worship team will start the coffee brewing! Look for the signup sheets on the “Church Connections” counter in the Narthex, to see where there are dates available.

DEACONS' MONTHLY MISSION

March

The Prokodov Family

In 2024, we lent our support to John Calvin Presbyterian Church in their effort to relocate this Ukrainian family of 5 to St. Peters. However, current immigration policies and delayed immigration status processing times, have resulted in an illegal working status for them. John Calvin Presbyterian Church wants to lighten their financial burden while they are unable to work. There will be more information available on March 22 when the offering for this family will be taken.

April - One Great Hour of Sharing

One of the PCUSA's Special Offerings, OGHS supports the work done for the causes of poverty, disaster, hunger, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees. Both individuals and communities in need are served through the provision of safety, sustenance, and hope. This offering will be collected on April 5, Easter Sunday.

May - H2O Committee

Once again the Deacons will partner with H2O this year to help provide goodies for the end of the year Field Day for the Success Campus at St. Charles High School.

Deacon Board members are: Janet Ferry, Moderator; Olivia Baker, Jess McMaken, Lara Mersnick, Wanda Romine, & Dara York

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

To do the good work that God calls us to do takes willing hearts and many hands. Thank you to all of the volunteers who work to make our church community a place that is known for their love.

Spiritual Formation

Kenda Carey
Hilary Kelly
Jerry Lyon
Mary Kay Lyon
Jess McMaken

Prime Time

Group Leaders: Hilary Kelly, Mary Kay Lyon,
Jess McMaken
Dinner Leader: Ruthie Farrell
Kitchen & Table Set-up Crew: Ginny Andres,
Nancy Brakeman, Lisa Brown,
Martha Henslee, Christiana Manyanye
Clean Up Crew: Ken Farrell, Spence Kelly,
Jerry Lyon
Special Guest Contributors: Angie Southard,
Bill Ebersole

Tuesday Tinkers

Building Moderator:
Jerry Lyon
Dennis Ziesmer
Bob Fletcher
Dave Blinne
Lew Tidd

Music & Worship Team

Paul York
Ruthie Farrell
Greg Southard
Bill Ebersole
Ken Farrell
Marcus Smith

Liturgists

Dave Brakeman
Kenda Carey
Margaret Cook
Jerry Lyon
Angie Southard
Dara York

Group Leaders

Lisa Brown
Jess McMaken
Ruth Smith
Sally Stumberg

Welcome Team

Nancy Brakeman
Sally Stumberg

Communion Preparation

Ken & Ruthie Farrell

Offering Counters

Dave & Nancy Brakeman
Bill Ebersole & Sally
Stumberg

Confirmation Class

Pastor Marilyn
Mary Kay Lyon

**All Committe Members & Chairpersons
All Deacons and Elders**

New Members & Church Officers

Welcome to our newest members! We welcome them as “Christ has welcomed us, for the glory of God,” and look forward to knowing them more in the days and years ahead. Being a new member can feel overwhelming, so let’s be helpful and encouraging to them as they get to know SCPC.

We welcome our newest Church Officers as well, and offer you words and prayers of encouragement as you begin your service and leadership for SCPC. Thank you for answering the call to serve!



Welcome to the Porter family:
Bryan, Angie (pictured);
Jackson, Nicholas (not pictured)

Welcome to Olivia & Jared Baker



Our newest Church Officers for 2026 are:
Elders - Dave Brakeman (new term)
Meredith Gnolfo (newly ordained)

Deacons - Jess McMaken (new term)
Wanda Romine (new term)
Olivia Baker (newly ordained)

SPRING CALENDAR



March

- March 3, 1 pm | Book Club, in the Java with Jesus
- March 5, 7-8:30 pm | Women's Fellowship Group, Java with Jesus
- March 8 | Daylight Savings Time begins-set your clocks forward
- March 11 | Prime Time, 5:30-7:30 pm; Dinner & Discussion Group, 6:30 pm, ACb
- March 15 | Spiritual Formation Comm. meeting, following worship; Welcome Team meeting, following worship
Movie, *The Way*, showing at 2 pm in Fellowship Hall
- March 18, 11:30 am | Lunch Bunch,
- March 19, 7 pm | Session, ACa
- March 25, 6-8 pm | Dinner & Discussion Group, The Smith's home
- March 29, 10:30 am | Palm Sunday, Holy Week begins

April

- April 2, 6 pm | Maundy Thursday Soup Supper Communion Service
- April 3 | Good Friday
- April 5 | Easter Sunday, Easter Egg Hunt following worship
- April 7 | Book Club, 1 pm, Java with Jesus
- April 8 | Prime Time, 5:30-7:30 pm, FH; Dinner & Discussion Group, 6:30 pm, ACb
- April 15, 11:30 am | Lunch Bunch
- April 16, 7 pm | Session, ACa
- April 19 | Youth Sunday
- April 22, 6-8 pm | Dinner & Discussion Group, The Smith's home

May

- May 5, 1 pm | Book Club, Java with Jesus
- May 7, 7 pm | Women's Fellowship Group, Java with Jesus
- May 13 | Prime Time, 5:30-7:30 pm, FH; Dinner & Discussion Group, 6:30, ACb
- May 17 | Last Day of Spiritual Formation classes
- May 20, 11:30 am | Lunch Bunch
- May 21, 7 pm | Session, ACa
- May 27, 6-8 pm | Dinner & Discussion Group, The Smith's home

What I am Carrying this Season in Lent

Some thoughts from Kenda Carey

Lent is my favorite season in the church. I find comfort in the remembering: the ashes on my forehead to remind me that “from dust I came, and to dust I shall return;” the road Jesus traveled toward his death and ultimately, resurrection; the familiar scriptures from the liturgy such as Psalm 51 and the familiar hymns we sing such as the one on Good Friday, “Were You There.” All of these things help me to remember, and in the remembering, there is grief and also peace.

Over the past few years, I have become familiar with grief. It has become a part of my story just as it has for many of you and eventually will be for all of us. Throughout my grief journey, I have felt God’s presence and wondered many times about the suffering Jesus endured on his journey to the cross. There have been countless ways it has been talked about and interpreted and it is a difficult part of our faith that demands our attention in wrestling with it. The old adage, “everything happens for a reason,” just doesn’t add up for me anymore, nor do I think it should. But something good **can** come from something terrible, can’t it? Spiritual director and writer, Emily P. Freeman, says this: “We still see this in the kingdom of God: life in exchange for death. Perhaps we’re coming to know God, not as one who wields control with a cosmic fist, but as one who suffered as we do, who has walked where we walk, and who has come back to be with us in it. Perhaps the heart of the gospel message is not that God is in control, but that God, in love, keeps company with us in our suffering.”

The best way I know to talk about this is through my own experience. God, in his infinite wisdom, knew what my suffering and grief would be. He knew the pain I would experience. And with the greatest measure of love, he chose to accompany me in it, to walk alongside me, in love and companionship, so I would not be alone.

This is what has followed me this season in Lent. God doing what only God can do: loving me in unfathomable ways, hard to describe or understand. I pray that you feel loved as you walk your journey in Lent this year. You are his beloved and he holds you always.

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