

# the INFORMER

St. John UCC

Extending God's Love & Grace | An Open & Affirming Congregation



## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS & EDUCATORS!

**August 10, 2025  
9:30 am Worship**

St. John UCC  
307 West Clay Street  
Collinsville, IL 62234

Be sure to join us as we begin the new school year with a special blessing. Any student or educator heading back to school, is welcome to bring in your backpack, bag or whatever you tote around to receive a tag!

The Learning Tree Preschool will host a special Coffee Hour after worship with kid friendly snacks.

They will also have an Open House to check out their new classrooms. You don't want to miss this!



### A word from "Mrs. Cat"

I look forward to leading our Sun. Aug. 3rd service. We have helpers lined up to share special music, read scripture, and help with a Children's Message. My sermon is called "Fear and Faith". Our scripture will be Psalm 27, beginning with "The Lord is my light and my salvation- whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life- of whom shall I be afraid?" We ran out of "Star Words" packets on June 1st; if you'd like a packet you can pick one up on Aug. 3rd. "Star Words" are a meditation word list, cut up so that there is just one word on each slip of paper. I loved the last word I drew out of my Star Words box so much that I haven't drawn out any new words since! The word I drew out is TIME. I just retired from violin teaching, and I love having more TIME in my life.

-Carolyn Catalano,  
St. John member and UCC Lay  
Speaker

To access the St. John UCC Collinsville YouTube channel, use the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDLLWhGXkkfbmGscZ-hallg>  
 Look for: St. John United Church of Christ Collinsville, IL



**Home Communion Available**  
 Do you worship from home on livestream or YouTube? If you want to participate in communion at home, there are pre-filled cups available in the church office!

## Sunday Attendance



June 2025	9:30 am Worship	Digital Views YouTube	Sunday School
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	73	48	n/a
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	76	42	n/a
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	86	34	n/a
June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	104	49	n/a
June 29 <sup>th</sup> VBS Sunday	150	66	n/a
<u>Sunday Average</u>	<b>98</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Do you have pictures of St. John UCC events, programs or one of our missions on your phone? We'd love to see them! Amy will use these photos to spread the word on how we help the community, and she will use some in the Annual Report. Please send photos to Amy by email, [office@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:office@stjohnucc-collinsville.org) or text 618-973-7771.



**Have you remembered  
 St. John United Church of Christ,  
 Collinsville, in your  
 Will or Final Bequest?**

### Anyone clean upholstery?

The church has several items that need some care and attention.

Please let the office know if you can help us out!



### Altar Committee Needs Help!

Looking for volunteers for a 2-month commitment working with a partner.

Duties include:

- preparing communion
- changing the Altar cloths
- straightening the pew pockets
- dusting as needed

If you are interested, please contact Karen Take at 618-288-7171.

**Ron & Dianne Winney** got married on September 4, 1965, at Salem UCC in Alhambra. They moved away for a few years as Ron served in the Army during Vietnam and Dianne taught. They moved back to the area in 1969 and joined St. John UCC shortly thereafter. They lived in Collinsville & Edwardsville up until three years ago when they moved to a retirement community outside Nashville, TN.

We are planning a party at their retirement community, but we would love to include friends from St. John in the festivities. So, we would love for you to participate in a “Card Party” where you send an anniversary card for their 60th anniversary which will be presented to them at their party later in September.

If you would like to participate, please send your card by September 1<sup>st</sup> to Christy Pursell, 207 Colebrook Rd, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.



## Grant Announcement

It gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction to announce that St. John UCC of Collinsville has been awarded a Relief Fund grant of \$30,000 from the Edwardsville Community Foundation! It was awarded for the purpose of a generator for a storm shelter.

The Edwardsville Community Foundation values trust, transparency, compassion, excellence, and equity and seeks to promote philanthropic ideals connecting people, resources, and solutions to create a lasting impact on our community.

The impact that our church has on this community every day is clear. We are in the heart of the community with the community at heart. However this challenging opportunity exists. Help is needed (\$3,000) to bridge the gap and continue to provide essential support to our community.

This grant is pending a 10% match of new cash donations. Once the 10% is achieved we will receive the \$30,000.

A donation today, regardless of size, will have a direct impact. Your gift will help us purchase this generator. Please consider making a donation today. Mark your check or envelope with “generator.” Thank you for your generosity and being a part of our mission. Together we are making a real difference in our community!!

Loretta Graham, Church Council



## Council Highlights

- Approved the Italian Fest Parking Lot Fundraiser for Youth Ministries.
- Approved the use of our facilities for the Boy Scouts Breakfast and the SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism.)
- Approved revised job descriptions for the Facility Manager and Audio-Visual Team Leader.
- Accepted the letter of retirement from Dana Callahan, effective 12/31/2025.
- Received a \$30K grant from the Edwardsville Community Foundation to be used towards the purchase and installation of an emergency generator.

\*Please Note: Final Council and Special Congregational Meeting minutes are available from the church office upon request.

## Financial update

In May, our church's financial situation was much better than expected—thanks to your generosity and strong community support. We ended the month with a net surplus of \$5,624, which is a big improvement over the \$20,301 shortfall we had anticipated. While regular giving through envelopes came in at \$26,512, which was \$1,843 less than expected, we received a very generous donation to support the HHH program and saw great participation in a community fundraiser walk. We also received payments from our preschool and cemetery ministries that helped cover shared expenses. Although we spent slightly more than budgeted, the overall result was very encouraging.

Looking at the year so far, we're still running behind where we'd like to be, with the General Fund showing a net deficit of \$25,793, which is \$9,824 worse than expected. Most of this gap is due to lower regular envelope giving, which totaled \$168,134, falling \$23,166 short of our goal. However, special gifts and successful events have helped make up some of the difference. We've also had some increased staffing costs in our facilities team, which will slightly raise expenses for the rest of the year. On a positive note, the HHH program is doing very well, with donations \$12,425 above expectations and expenses right on budget, leaving us with a surplus of \$1,325 so far this year. We're grateful for all the ways you support the mission of our church—through your gifts, your time, and your prayers.

**Teachers  
wanted!**

### Sunday School Teachers Needed for Fall!

Youth Ministries is looking for adults willing to commit to teaching one Sunday a month. The lesson plans are already written and are easy to follow. All the supplies are provided. If you are nervous about leading a classroom, we would love for you to join one of our lead teachers. They could always use an extra set of hands. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with the next generation of believers. Please contact Leslie at 618-691-3629 to volunteer.

## Faith Walking

June Mileage – 680 miles logged! Way to go!!  
August Prayer Theme: Let the Son Shine  
There is walking every weekday in August, and we are back to our normal hours!  
7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Greeters help you log your progress!  
Free-Will Offering  
Faith Walkers will celebrate the July and August Birthdays on Friday, August 1 at 12:00 p.m. Come out and enjoy some awesome fellowship and yummy treats with us!

## Spirit of Sharing (S.O.S.) Soup Kitchen

St. John Church hosts S.O.S. on Thursday, August 7 at St. John. Please look in the Narthex for the sign-up sheets to bring food and to volunteer on Sunday, August 3 or call the Church Office. Thank you to John Green and Jim Achenbach for leading the St. John S.O.S. Team! Please contact them if you have any questions. The Collinsville Food Pantry and S.O.S. Soup Kitchen continue to see a huge need by patrons needing assistance. Please help if you are able.



## Pickleball

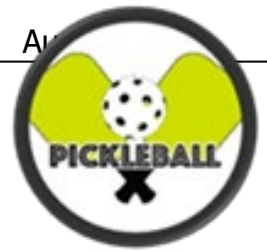
### Put Your Game Face On!

Mondays from 5:30-8:00 P.M.

Learn the game while you play!

**A free-will offering will be accepted.**

Questions: Contact Norb Kneipp at 345-7270 or Dana at 344-2526



## Staff & Leadership

**Rev. Jennifer Sowell**, Senior Pastor, 618-250-7983

[pastorjenn@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:pastorjenn@stjohnucc-collinsville.org)

**Amy Rhymer**, Pastoral

Assistant/Communications

[office@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:office@stjohnucc-collinsville.org)

**Jenny King**, Music Director

[music@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:music@stjohnucc-collinsville.org)

**Laurie Voss**, Accompanist

**Dana Callahan**, Outreach Director

[faithhall@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:faithhall@stjohnucc-collinsville.org)

**Leslie Musallam**, Christian Education

**Mike Liljegen**, Council President

[churchcouncil@stjohnucc-collinsville.org](mailto:churchcouncil@stjohnucc-collinsville.org)

**Paul Ham**, VP, Trustee Chair

**Jon Hester**, Treasurer, Deacons Chair

**Ginger Schantz**, Secretary

**Nancy Berry**, Elders Chair

**The Learning Tree Preschool**,

618-344-2562

**St. John Cemetery**, 618-344-0749

**St. John's Community Care**,

618-344-5008



## HHH Summer Camp

The last day of HHH Summer Camp was July 24. Look for the full report in next month's Informer. Take a look at the **HHH-After School Tutoring and Summer Camp Program** Facebook page to see pictures!

This summer, the HHH Staff was asked to jot down their feelings or an experience from camp or a "feel good" story that could be shared with the congregation. These will be shared over the next few issues of the Informer.

Pastor Lisa Hart drives from Ferguson, MO to be a Reading Buddy for us; this is her second year at camp! Here is her observation about this part of our program:

As a Reading Buddy, I found variety and delight in every session. The children and the books they choose range from "One Fish, Two Fish, Three Fish, Blue Fish" to Everything about Animals. Some are very good readers, going through several books in the half hour session. Some struggle to sound out words, but enjoy sharing the pictures with me. One girl was able to read level 3 books, but also liked to hear me read about the Monster under the Bed. But just in case it would go to my head, just in case I would think it was about me, the comfort dogs came to the room. Reading to a Buddy is good, but reading to Jordan or Esther was their delight. Books, dogs and children – what could be better?

Sue Meadows, a life-long Collinsville resident who heard about us through the First United Methodist Church, has been volunteering for HHH as a tutor and as a camp counselor since 2022. She writes:

I have made many new friends both young and old. It is so wonderful to watch our community come together to make HHH such an amazing experience for so many children and families. I have worked with some of these families for multiple years now. It's fun to watch the kids mature both physically and socially. One particular memory stands out watching so many adults and children show such community pride during the Juneteenth parade. There were 47 children and 17 adults who walked together. Everyday during lunch it warms my heart to watch so much joy in all the faces. It is a privilege to participate in HHH.

This summer, we welcomed two new awesome volunteers to our staff, sisters Deb Boylan and Pat Ryan! Deb was our Compost Captain and Pat was a Camp Counselor for the 1st & 2nd graders and a Reading Buddy.

One day, a new to camp 1st grader named Peyton was very interested when her class visited the compost pile to learn where all our food waste from camp went after the campers put it in the bucket instead of the trash can. Peyton was so excited about what she had learned that she brought her own pair of gloves the

next day so she could help Miss Deb with the compost pile. Pat also shared a story about another of her first graders, Dakari. During lunch, he brought a cup of water over to a girl in his group – totally on his own without anyone asking him to do it. He told Pat that he had noticed that the girl forgot her water when she picked up her food tray. Pat said, “I thought it was a powerful (even though small) gesture of kindness. The girl who had received the water happened to be a child that had been struggling with some feelings – being newer to the group.”

Elizabeth Ellis, a second year HHH volunteer, shared the following:

My experience as a camp counselor for HHH 2025 was really great. I truly enjoyed every minute that I spent at the camp. I loved meeting and working with all the adults (I called them my friends.) The people I worked with were kind and friendly. Everyone seemed to be happy working for the good of the children. I especially enjoyed working and playing with the children. I loved the activities built into the program. I found that each activity served two different purposes. One, we have fun, and two, we learn something new. I also loved the food, family style dining, and story time. We were able to enjoy a nice meal and socialize while eating and we also were treated with a nice story each day.

Margaret Sitts was new to the camp staff this year after years of sending her foster children to HHH. She no longer fosters but wants to give back for all we did for her kids. She writes:

I have to say I really enjoyed my summer break here at HHH 2025. I got a chance to watch over the children in the 3rd/4th grade group. I watched the children's actions and interactions as they embraced each other, and I was very pleased with the way they took care of each other. On the very first day, I asked one of our campers if he could help another camper who seemed to be a little intimidated by the crowd. He put a big smile on his face and said yes and he did just that, he helped her out. He sat with her and played a couple of games. When we moved to the other rooms, he would sit next to her. For the next couple of days he stayed with her. As she got more and more comfortable, he pulled away and gave her, her space.

**We learned every day just how amazing our campers, and our staff are!**



### HHH Tutoring

We need more than a few good people to tutor 1st through 8th grade students. The more tutors we have, the more kids we can tutor! The program starts on Tuesday, September 23 and is from 3 to 6 pm on

Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are in the process of recruiting people who want to make a difference in the lives of children in our community. Contact Dana at 618-344-2526 if you can spare an hour or two a week. This is a highly rewarding experience!



# "BROADWAY BOUND" DRAMA CAMP

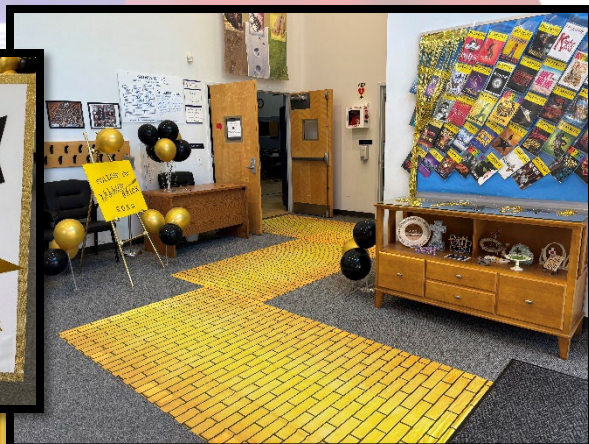
August 2025



Thanks to the many folks who helped make our Drama Camp a success! The week was filled with friendship, singing, dancing, creating and an evening performance with skits from 3 Broadway Musicals.



# "A NIGHT ON BROADWAY"



Thank you to all the talented people who participated in "A Night on Broadway" ... on the stage as well as behind the scenes!



**Take Note:** Choir practice will resume on **Wednesday, September 3, 2025.**

**C.O.P.s** (Children of Praise) 5:30-6:00 pm  
in the choir room

**Handbells** 6:00-7:00 pm  
in the balcony

**Adult Choir** 7:15-8:30 pm  
in the choir room







## **Greetings from the Blessing Box!**

You may have noticed that the plexiglass on one side of the front of the blessing box has been broken. Sometime over the next month, it will be replaced, and the box will get a fresh coat of paint.

Please keep the food and toiletry products coming! As a reminder, if you have items for the box and prefer to leave them on the kitchen counter near the gymnasium, I will put them in the storage room and place them in the box later.

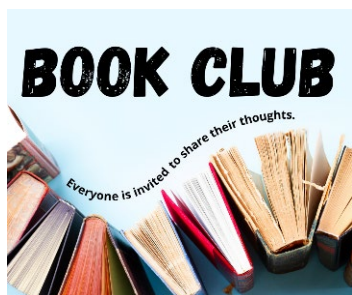
Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry!

## **AARP Smart Driver Class**

Are you (or are your parents) over 55?? Would you like to get a discount on your car insurance for the next 3 years? Take the AARP Driver Safety Class. Learn about new laws, new car features, road designs (roundabouts etc.) and *refresh your general driving knowledge*. You must attend both days. \$20 for AARP members, \$25 for non members. (Cash or Check ONLY)



**Wednesday, Aug. 6th & Thursday, Aug. 7th 9:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Call St John's Community Care to register - call 618-344-5008.**



Our book club has chosen the next book we will be reviewing: Our book club has chosen the next book we will be reviewing: Anxious People by Fredrik Backman. Looking at real estate isn't usually a life-or-death situation, but an apartment open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes a group of strangers hostage. The captives include a recently retired couple who relentlessly hunt down fixer-uppers to avoid the painful truth that they can't fix their own marriage. There's a wealthy bank director who has been too busy to care about anyone else and a young couple who are about to have their first child

but can't seem to agree on anything. Add to the mix an eighty-seven-year-old woman who has lived long enough not to be afraid of someone waving a gun in her face, a flustered but still-ready-to-make-a-deal real estate agent, and a mystery man who has locked himself in the apartment's only bathroom, and you've got the worst group of hostages in the world. Each of them carries a lifetime of grievances, hurts, secrets, and passions that are ready to boil over. None of them is entirely who they appear to be. And all of them—the bank robber included—desperately crave some sort of rescue. As the authorities and the media surround the premises, these reluctant allies will reveal surprising truths about themselves and set in motion a chain of events so unexpected that even they can hardly explain what happens next.

Everyone is welcome. Plan on reading the book prior to attending the book review. Bring your thoughts and come share in the discussion. We plan on meeting on Tuesday afternoon **August 5th at 1:00 p.m.** We are meeting in the Parlor (note the change in location). We hope you will join us.



## FALL RUMMAGE SALE VOLUNTEERS AND RUMMAGE NEEDED!

The annual Fall Rummage Sale benefits Homework Help & Hoops (HHH).

Set-up begins on Tuesday, September 9 at 1 pm. Rummage Sale is Thursday & Friday, September 10 & 11.

We need a large group of volunteers for EACH of the following days and tasks:

- to set up tables in Faith Hall on Tuesday, September 9 at 1 pm
- to sort and set out the rummage these three days:
  - Tuesday, September 9 – 3:00-6:00 P.M.
  - Wednesday, September 10 – 9:00-6:00 P.M.
  - Thursday, September 11 – 9:00 – 12:00 P.M.
- to be checkers, baggers, and customer service representatives during the sale days:
  - Thursday, September 11 4:00-5:00 – \$10 Pre-Sale Shopping & 5:00-7:00 – Open to the Public
  - Friday, September 12 9:00-12:00 -\$3 Bag Day
- to clean-up, haul away rummage, and take down tables at 12:00, Friday, September 12. Please let Dana know if you have a truck and are willing to take a haul!

**Start cleaning your cupboards, closets, and basements!**



# FALL RUMMAGE SALE



All proceeds benefit the  
Homework Help & Hoops  
(HHH) Program

**Thursday, September 11 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm,**

VIP pre-sale \$10/person + Free Will Offering

**Thursday, September 11 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

Open to Public with Free Will Offering

**Friday, September 12 9:00 am - 11:00 pm**

Open to Public \$3.00 A Bag



**VOLUNTEERS,  
RUMMAGE & JEWELRY NEEDED!**



## Youth Ministries **Italian Fest** Parking Fundraiser

The Italian Fest is September 19 and 20, which means it is time for Youth Ministries to block off the parking lots at St. John Church and volunteers to collect money to raise funds for the youth.

### Church members can help us in a couple of ways:

1. Purchase a \$25 VIP parking pass that entitles the purchaser to a guaranteed, assigned parking spot, with come and go privileges in the Clay Street lot across from the church, (passes on sale in the Atrium on the Sundays before the event or in the church office), or
2. Work a shift to collect money and direct cars to parking spots in the church lots on either Friday, Sept. 19 or Saturday, Sept. 20. By helping, you may purchase a VIP parking pass for ONLY \$15. Contact Leslie (618-691-3629) if you would like to help!



## Sunday School resumes on Rally Sunday, September 7, 2025 at 9:30 am

There will be a special, circus themed, Rally Sunday Worship Service at 9:30 a.m. as we celebrate the start of a new Sunday School year. Following the Children's Moment, the Pastor will excuse the Sunday School students and staff for a Meet & Greet in Fellowship Hall. Following the worship service, there will be snacks & activities for all ages. Invite all your friends and neighbors to join in the fun!

## Blessing of Sunday School and Crib Room Staff:

On Sunday, September 14, there will be a time in Worship for the Blessing of the 3-Year-Olds, the Blessing of the Sunday School and Crib Room Staff, and the Presentation of Bibles to the 4<sup>th</sup> Graders.

## CRIB ROOM INFORMATION

The Crib Room is staffed by volunteers for the 9:30 a.m. worship service for children 3 years old and younger. If you feel called to help in the Crib Room, please contact Leslie at 618-691-3629.



August 2025

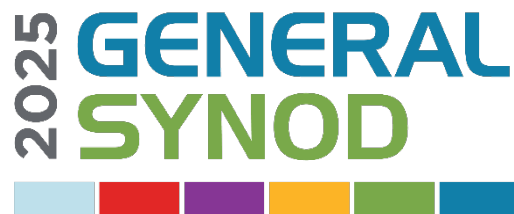


This summer has been a busy one, as most of our summers are at St. John UCC. The last time I wrote for the Informer, we had “on our horizon” the Juneteenth Parade and Festival.

I can happily report the event was not only wonderful for our town, but it was an outstanding event for the church. First, almost the entire enrollment of HHH showed up for the parade—49 kids, youth and adults came, in yellow shirts as bright as the sun, and had a wonderful time marching. I believe we were one of the largest groups to participate—and what the public noticed was a united group of children and adults, multiage and multiracial, gathered to celebrate the freedom on which Juneteenth is established.

After the parade, a group of adult volunteers and I sat at our St. John UCC/HHH table, giving out handmade soaps and cards made by the kids. We talked to so many people, gave out flyers and information, and (I believe) were witnesses to God working in our church and community. It was a good event—worth our time and energy—and I hope you might consider joining us next year!

I was also privileged enough to attend part of our denomination’s General Synod this month. I had a whirlwind weekend in Kansas City, following several of the “big” resolutions that were in discernment, celebrating with the ONA Coalition, and also squeezing in some sightseeing, learning and baseball. Oh—and barbeque!



One of the questions our denomination has wrestled with is about how we are to be a “United and Uniting” church in the world. And how this plays out in relationships with other groups (denominations) that differ in some way to our UCC policies. Often, it comes down to how important any particular point of difference is to you personally. Our denomination voted this summer to re-establish a relationship with our sister churches in Puerto Rico, a historically related group that had separated themselves years ago over a disagreement about LGBTQ inclusion.

You may be asking why this is important—especially if you (like me) have no personal point of connection here. I am neither Puerto Rican, Latina, or LGBTQ+. What would I care about this resolution?

This is what I learned: how we deal with difference and disagreement is 100% relevant to my life, my call and my commitment to the UCC. When we voted to reestablish connection, even though there is still hurt to heal (when the separation happened, it was quite painful for many), we opened a pathway for the Holy Spirit to do Her work. Now, there is an opening and opportunity for transformation, which will be beneficial for every member, not only those who have an obvious or immediate point of relation.

St. John UCC family, we are a church who believes God continues to act in the world and in our hearts to bring us together, not tear us apart. God wants us to connect, make peace, build bridges and offer healing and reconciliation. It’s never easy, but it is the way in which we all can participate in building God’s Kingdom (some like Kin-dom) here on earth, as it is in Heaven.

May it be so in your life and in mine. Amen.

Rev. Jennifer Sowell



We have been very busy this summer getting The Learning Tree ready for the upcoming school year! Some exciting changes are taking place this year, and we would like to invite all of you to come take a look at our new classrooms that are now all located on the upper floor of the education building.

The Learning Tree will be hosting a coffee hour after the Blessing of the Backpacks & Educators worship on August 10. We will have kid-friendly snacks and have all the classrooms open for you to visit during this coffee hour. Staff will be on hand to give tours and share updates!

We paused Summer Tree this year for the classroom relocation but are making plans for it's return for next summer.

It was exciting to see so many of our Learning Tree Friends at VBS this summer. It is always a blessing to have them attend this very special week of fun and worship.

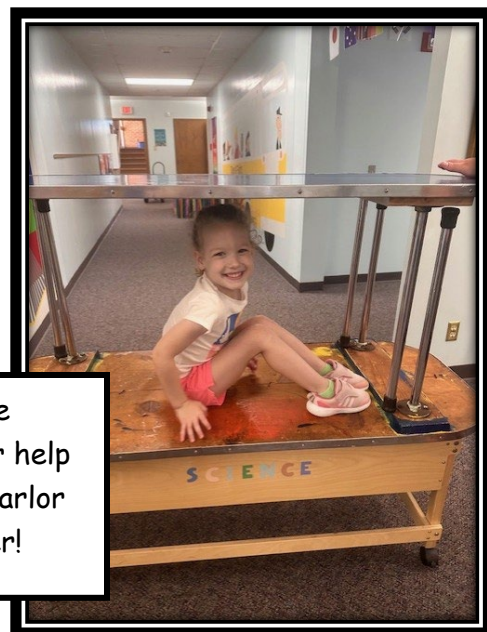
Our current enrollment is almost full! We are offering classes for children aged 3-5 years old. Pre-School Plus is a new addition to our program this year. This class will meet in the mornings all week and is designed for children that are eligible for kindergarten, but would like an extra year to grow socially, emotionally or academically. We also allow older 4-year-olds to enroll in this class if there are openings. Heather Freeman will be teaching this class, and we are thrilled to have her with us this year. She has experience teaching kindergarten and first grade in the Collinsville School District. Taylor Furman will be joining us in our three-year-old class this school year. She brings experience teaching at local preschools and daycares to our program. Both Heather and Taylor have had children learn and grow with us here at The Learning Tree.

The Learning Tree will also be hosting an activity on Rally Sunday, September 7 to help kick off the Sunday school year!

It is going to be a great year!

Gigi Liljegren, The Learning Tree Director

Big Thank You to the Freeman family for their help moving classrooms and parlor furniture this summer!







## COLLINSVILLE FAITH IN ACTION

233 North Seminary Street, Collinsville, IL 62234

Volunteer Caregivers: 618-344-8080

Answers on Aging: 618-344-7788

The Elder Connection: 618-799-9085

Fax: 618-344-3227

*"Serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13*

### Would you like to help the ongoing endeavors of Collinsville Faith in Action?

One of the many ways to help is through Monetary Donations.

**Click** to Donate button on our webpage to make a one-time or recurring monthly donations.

Regular scheduled monthly or quarterly donations help us plan our budget more accurately.

**Text** the word PLEDGE to 618-249-3227 on your smartphone to quickly and easily set up a one-time or regularly scheduled donation. This is an easy way to donate, and you can share the text-to-donate information easily with friends and family.

**Call** us at 618-344-8080 to set up a one-time or recurring donation with your credit or debit card. In just a few minutes, we'll have you set up!

**Mail** to 233 N. Seminary St., Collinsville, IL 62234. It's always a pleasure to receive notes from our supporters, we appreciate it!

#### **Plan to Donate:**

- Check with your employer to see if they offer a Matching Donor benefit. If so, for every dollar you donate, your employer will match that amount thereby doubling your donor power.
- Bequests are a beautiful way to build your Faith in Action legacy. Working with Land of Lincoln Legal Aid at no charge or your own lawyer, you can name CFIA in your will or as an organization that is named by you as a recipient receiving donations in your memory.
- Talk to your financial advisor to have funds that may increase your taxes to be directly donated to CFIA. You help your community, and you don't have to pay income tax on the earnings.

#### **Other ways to Donate or Help**

Forever Postage Stamps help us stay in contact with volunteers, clients, and supporters.

Activity Leaders for our monthly Elder Connection Luncheon. If you have a skill that you would like to share with the 15 participants (such as painting or flower arranging), we would love to have you come and spend about 45 minutes leading that activity.

Volunteer to help our organization with administrative jobs, to work directly with our clients, or to help CFIA into the future.

Pray that we may continue the work we do in our community.

In faith and gratitude,  
Lisa Ciszczon Brennen, Executive Director

Do you have unused birthday cards of thank you cards? Please consider donating them to CFIA. They are great for keeping in contact with clients and volunteers alike.



August 2025

222 Goethe Ave.  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
618-344-5008  
[www.stjohnscc.org](http://www.stjohnscc.org)

## St. John's Community Care Celebrates its 40th Anniversary



### Save the Date

September 2, 2025

4:00-6:30 p.m.

Faith Hall, St. John United Church of Christ

Forty years ago, our church leaders had a vision to serve older adults and caregivers. On July 8, 1985, they founded what is now St. John's Community Care in the basement of the Collinsville church.

What began as a handful of part-time employees providing non-medical care in the homes of older people grew into who we are today - an essential service for Metro East families.

Members of the congregation built the Collinsville center with their own hands in 2001. They added on as the Adult Day Program grew and behind the building, volunteers created a courtyard with wide walking paths, large patio, and a perennial garden with beautiful flowers.

When Edwardsville families asked for Adult Day services, SJCC responded by opening a center near the university.

Today, St. John's Community Care is a proud United Way partner and receives more support from individual donors and foundations every year. They have plans to expand the Adult Day Program to Highland soon. Thanks to you, the caring never ends!

### Save September 2 for the Anniversary Party

Make plans now to celebrate Caring Together for 40 Years. The founders of St. John's Community Care will be there along with supporters, community leaders, and church members.

### Sponsorships Available

If you want to show your support for older adults and their families in the Metro East, please contact Beth Hammock, director of development, to find out about sponsorship opportunities. You can reach her at [bhammock@stjohnscc.org](mailto:bhammock@stjohnscc.org) or 618-344-5008.

## Six-Week Course for Caregivers of Older Adults Begins August 5

St. John's Community Care is hosting a series of nationally recognized courses for caregivers called Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Two new courses begin in August. Over the course of six weeks, caregivers receive tools to take care of themselves while caring for an older adult. St. John's Community Care offers the course free thanks to funding from AgeSmart Community Resources.

Iowa State University of Science and Technology owns and manages the curriculum that meets the highest level of evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion. In the course, caregivers learn to communicate better with those they care for, make tough decisions about their care, and locate helpful resources.

Two experienced class leaders, Ray Gallaher and Joan Garner, will conduct the next series at St. John's Community Care – one on Zoom and the other in person. Interactive lessons, discussions, and brainstorming will help caregivers choose tools to put into action in their day-to-day lives.

St. John's Community Care's August classes will take place on

- Tuesdays on Zoom from 6:00-7:30 p.m. beginning August 5, and
- Thursdays in person from 1:30-3:00 p.m. beginning August 7.

The class is free, and participants will receive a book, The Caregiver Helpbook. Class size is limited, and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, contact Ray Gallaher at 618-344-5008 or [rgallaher@stjohnscc.org](mailto:rgallaher@stjohnscc.org).

Christine Thurber (she/her)  
Executive Director, St. John's  
Community Care

### Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers

**Courses Begin  
in August**

**In Person and on Zoom**



### St. John's Community Care Free Medical Equipment Loan Program



Don't forget about the Free medical equipment loan program to help those in need. This program is available at the Collinsville location and is open to anyone who requires equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, bath chairs, crutches, canes, and more.

We also accept donations of small medical equipment to supplement our inventory. Donations can be dropped off between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday. For more information, call 618-344-5008 or visit our website at [www.stjohnscc.org](http://www.stjohnscc.org).



# Save the Date!

August 2025



2025

August

SUNDAY 27	MONDAY 28	TUESDAY 29	WEDNESDAY 30	THURSDAY 31	FRIDAY 01 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking Walkers B-Day Party	SATURDAY 02
03 8:39-30 am Worship <u>*No Communion*</u>	04 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 9:00 am Miriam's Ministry 5:30-8 pm Pickleball	05 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking Evening Circle Night Out	06 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 6:00 pm Quilting & Crafting	07 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 5:30-6:00 pm S.O.S. 7:00 pm Elders	08 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	09
10 Blessing of the Backpacks 8:30 pm Bible Study 9:30 am Worship *Communion* 10:30 am Coffee Hour	11 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 9:00 am Miriam's Ministry 5:30-8 pm Pickleball	12 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 1:00 pm Book Club	13 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 6:00 pm Quilting & Crafting	14 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 5:30-6:00 pm S.O.S. 7:00 pm Deacons	15 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	16
17 8:30 pm Bible Study 9:30 am Worship	18 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 9:00 am Miriam's Ministry 5:30-8 pm Pickleball	19 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	20 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 6:00 pm Quilting & Crafting	21 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 5:30-6:00 pm S.O.S. 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Council	22 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	23
24 8:30 pm Bible Study 9:30 am Worship	25 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 9:00 am Miriam's Ministry 5:30-8 pm Pickleball	26 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	27 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 6:00 pm Quilting & Crafting	28 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking 5:30-6:00 pm S.O.S.	29 7-9 & 11-1 Faith Walking	30
31 8:30 pm Bible Study 9:30 am Worship	01	Notes:				



307 West Clay Street  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
618-344-2526  
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# *the* Informer

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