**Bellissimo Bell Choir Christmas Cantata**

Sun., Dec. 15, during both worship services
Breathe of Heaven, Celtic Silent Night,
He Is Born, Away in a Manger,
Ebenezer, Angels from the Realms of Glory.
The speakers will be Jordan Burke, Tori & Lexi Leifel, and
Connor Tidler. Also included in the Cantata will be an
orchestra consisting of students of Beiermann Music.

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**CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve**
3 Worship Services
5pm Family Service
8 & 10pm Candlelight Worship Services with
Lessons and Carols
Nursery at 5 & 8pm

**Sunday, Dec. 29,** One service at 9:30am,
NO Sunday School, NO nursery

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**Merry Christmas from the Staff**
Thank You for the Altar Flowers

Nov. 17 – John & Susan Rodgers
in memory of their son Geoff
and Jon & Sandra Devermann
in memory of their son Matthew.

Nov. 24 – Tom & Katie Burke in honor of her mother,
Anne Bishop’s Nov. 14 birthday, and in honor of
their son, Jordan’s Nov. 26 birthday.

Dec. 1 – Tom & Sandra VanBurgen in memory of their
granddaughter, Bianca Acosta.

2013 Contribution Reminder – To ensure 2013
deductibility of your pledges/contributions, they must
be received or postmarked by December 31. The church
office will be open until noon on Dec 31st if you wish
to drop them off. All funds received after Jan 1 will be
credited to 2014 pledge/contribution statements. Please
contact Rosemary Kagel at 630-584-0929 ext 312, or
financial@uccstc.org for any questions.

The Bellissimo Bell Choir will be performing in the
rotunda at Orchestra Hall, in Chicago,
Saturday, December 21, before the CSO Christmas
Concert from 1:30-3pm, and during intermission.

Church Office Closed
Tues., Dec. 24 (open 8-12) Wed., Dec. 25
Thurs., Dec. 26, Tues, Dec. 31 (open 8-12,) Wed. Jan. 1

Guide Book Directory Corrections
Please update your guide book membership directory, thanks.
Carolyn Higgins 630-715-9062
Al Higgins, 630-240-8607
Denise Pollack, 630-294-2293
Roy Pollack, 630-443-9072
Sue Hamer, 630-454-4009
Dean & Diane Hemmingsen
6N308 Burrside Ln
St Charles, IL 60175

The Irish are Coming
Next summer between July 15 and August 15 our church will be
hosting Rev. Chris Hudson from Belfast, Northern Ireland while John
is at their church. In the 1920s the Belfast church did an exchange with
People's Church in Chicago and are reviving the Chicago connection
with us this summer. Chris and his wife (Isabelle) have been active in the
peace movement in Belfast and met with our Intentional Travel group
when we were in Ireland in 2010. More specific information will follow
in the early spring.

Credit Cards
At their last meeting on November 18, the Church
Council members voted to initiate a trial use of credit cards
by members of the congregation. On December 8, only
donations to disaster relief or to catch up on pledges and
contributions can be put on credit cards. The Council will
continue to evaluate the process and in the future consider
use of credit cards for such things as family camp, youth and
adult mission trips as well as increase the use for pledges and
contributions.

Signing the new “Black” Pew Tablets
We encourage you to sign the pew tablets each week
in worship not so that we know where you are at all times,
but rather so that we are aware of long absences. We want
to make sure that if you are absent for an extended time
that we reach out to you in case something has happened.
We want to be able to offer help, support and prayers if it is
needed. By signing the pew tablet, we know that you were
in worship and that you may not be in need of our help at
this time.

We ask that our members no only sign the pew tablet
but also to encourage our visitors to sign as well. Members
can then greet those in their pew by name. If we aren’t all
signing with addresses or e-mails, our visitors typically do
not either, which makes it near impossible to reach out to
them. I continue to encourage you to sign the pew tablet
each week especially during this Holiday Season!

Kim Barth, Connections Coordinator

PLEASE PRAY FOR
Marc DeSilva
Carolyn Higgins
Margie Johnson
Carolyn Mack
Rozella Nagy
Ann Richards
Mylania Santucci

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Carolyn Mack
Rozella Nagy
Ann Richards
Mylania Santucci
Birthday gifts – how we all love to get them! Each year as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of the gifts that were given at that first Christmas - joy, hope, peace, and love. They have endured time and today we continue to be reminded of them through the words of the Christmas story found in Luke 1:5 – 2:7. The preschool through fifth grade are finding out how Mary and Elizabeth lived that first Christmas experiencing those 4 wonderful gifts. The angel Gabriel was very busy bringing wonderful news, first to Elizabeth and then 6 months later to Mary. Astonished is probably an understatement for both of these ladies. Elizabeth was getting way-on in years and never expected to be a mother and Mary, as we know, was just engaged but not married. During this Advent Season how do we – no matter how young or old we are – share these gifts? At the same time, our 6th and 7th graders will be experiencing Christmas Around the World. As always, many thanks to those teaching in December – Tara Moffitt, Renee Schroeder, Linda Geni, Kim and Mark Oeltgen, Carie Schultz and Kim Wascher.

Check out our “Happy Birthday Jesus!!!” drawings located in the Sunday school hallway. From Preschool through 5th grade, each artist has drawn what this means to him or her.

On the first Sunday of each month, Communion Sunday, the 3rd through 5th graders will be brought to the sanctuary to join in the sacrament of communion. Look for informational letters in January about the Communion program that will be offered starting in February to all 2nd graders.

Change is in the air for the 6th and 7th Sunday school class. Starting in January, they will start meeting in room 115 (the tiger room). Room 111 will become the music room for all of our Happy Hearts choir members.

Want to give and experience the gifts of joy, hope, love and peace – no matter what age? Sign up for caroling (on the Christian Education Board near Fellowship Hall) to bring these gifts to residents of one of the following: Delnor Glen Assisted Living, Pine View Care Center, Hofmstad Retirement Community, or Marklund (a facility for the severely disabled).

There will be no Sunday school or nursery care on December 29th. For young children, please help yourself to the cloth activity bags that are placed outside of the sanctuary in a basket. Also available are free coloring books for children to take home.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas full of joy, peace, love and hope!

Tassie Brautigam, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Church Family Camp
July 27–August 1, 2014, Blowing Rock NC
All interested individuals, couples, & families of all ages to join us for an amazing experience next summer filled with opportunities for hiking, fishing, rafting, friendship and so much more. Questions? facebook.com/CUCCFamilyCamp or email Lisa (Lsidor@msn.com) or Suzy (suzyq Daly@sbcglobal.net).
Signups and permission slips for all youth activities are on the bulletin board outside the youth room #119, lower level. Contact Rev. Suzy Daly with questions. suzyqdaly@sbcglobal.net

GF YOUTH GROUP
Every Wednesday in Room 119
6:30 - 7:00 Socialize time
7:00-8:00 Activity/discussion
8:00-8:15 GF Circle
NO GF Dec. 25, Jan. 1

CONFIRMATION is a class program for 8th graders and above who wish to become members of the church. Contact Rev. Suzy Daly with questions at suzyqdaly@sbcglobal.net

Dec. 13, 6-11pm

TGII MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP
Meets once a month for various activities.

HELPING HANDS
for 4-5th Graders

3rd Wed. of each month, 5-6pm

Our youth have been busy doing for others!
at Northern Illinois Food Bank in November, a group of GF alum, leaders and current GFers worked a shift packing pumpkin (4320 lbs) and corn (2061 lbs).

TGII scavenger hunt - 4 kids gathered a cart full of food and a BUNCH of new items to be donated to the Salvation Army shop for families to ‘buy’ presents. THANKS to Linda Geni and Jim Webster who drove and Maggie Molloy who helped chaperone!

Helping Hands packed 60 stockings for the Night Ministry. A HUGE thanks to THREADS of FRIENDSHIP who sewed ALL 60 stockings that will warm hearts this season! Also a HUGE thank you to all who donated items for the stockings!

CUCC Mom’s Group

December 17: 7pm - Cookie exchange at Megan Selck’s home (41W798 Bowgren Dr., Elburn, IL 60119). Please bring 2 dozen cookies to share and plan on bringing 2 dozen different cookies home! Please RSVP to cuccmoms@gmail.com

December 21: 3:30pm - Movie showing in Fellowship Hall - “The Polar Express”. Please join us in watching a holiday favorite. Bring your own comfortable seating and a box of hot cocoa.

January 7: 8am and 7pm - Bootcamp Workout. Here just in time to help with our New Year’s resolutions, Tracy Richter has offered to lead an exercise class to help us sweat off some of those holiday calories! Childcare provided at the church. All women of the church and Swing Set family welcome.

January 21: 8am and 7pm (in lieu of monthly meeting) - Bootcamp Workout - again round of workout classes to help us keep to those new exercise regiments. If popularity of these classes is high, this may have potential to be offered throughout the year. Childcare provided.

Merry Christmas and Happy 2014!
Any questions please contact cuccmoms@gmail.com.

F.O.G. Puppet Troupe NEWS

• Dec. 8 - Perform for Sunday School, 9-10:30.
• Dec. 9 - Perform at Marklund, home for developmentally disabled adults, (5:30 - 7:30). We need help here. There will be a signup sheet for 30 pushers, age 14 and older, to push wheelchairs to the main building for this program.
• Dec. 15 - Participation with puppets at the church caroling event.
• Dec. 16 - FOG Christmas party.
• Winter break until Jan. 27, 2014. Good time to join the Puppet Troupe.

If you would like to find out more or join this group and are at least a 5th grader, please call or email Jeanne Humke, 630-584-7108, humkegrp@aol.com

Congregational UCC St. Charles
CUCCStCharles

For those of you who tweet and those of you who post...you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter wherever you may be! For those kids at college, while on a business trip, sitting alongside an athletic field or even at home in bed it is a great way to know what is happening here on Sunday mornings and throughout the week! Kim Barth and Suzy Daly are hoping those of you who are already active will help share the positive things about our church community so others can connect with us. Please contact Kim or Suzy if you have any questions.
We Can Do This

The following is an excerpt from an interview by Parade Magazine with Rick Warren, pastor at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA. He is best known for his book The Purpose Driven Life. He has a new book out called The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life. In the title “Daniel” refers to the biblical prophet who often spoke about the benefits of healthy eating. The comments in parenthesis at the end of some paragraphs are my thoughts added in.

Four years ago, Warren had an epiphany, and not a heavenly one. He was midway through a mass baptism ceremony, lowering congregants into a pool of water and lifting them out again, when he realized: Man, we’re all fat.

“It wasn’t a very spiritual thought,” he admits. “My second thought was, ‘I’m fat, too, and I’m a terrible example.’ ”

His sermon the following Sunday included a confession—he wanted to lose 90 pounds—and a proposal: Let’s all get healthy together. To his surprise, more than half of the 22,000 members of his church pledged to join him on the spot. (Well, we have slightly less members than this but this is very intriguing to me…)

Warren then reached out to three experts—brain specialist Dr. Daniel Amen, metabolic expert Dr. Mark Hyman, and cardio-thoracic surgeon and TV personality Dr. Mehmet Oz. Together they built a healthy lifestyle regimen around their five F’s: faith, food, fitness, focus, and friends. (OK…I like where this is going!)

A year after starting the plan, Warren’s congregation had collectively dropped 250,000 pounds. (What???)

What led you to start a health movement through your church?

I grew up in a churchgoing family, went to a Christian college, two seminaries. Yet I had never heard a single sermon on the importance of staying fit. So I started studying the Bible to learn what God had to say about health. One of the teachings is that God made my body; it is a gift. I’m supposed to take good care of it.

Did you feel that leading the Daniel Plan fit under your job description as a minister?

There’s a verse in the Bible that says Jesus went into every village preaching, teaching, and healing. I say that preaching is evangelism; teaching is education; and healing is health care. Jesus didn’t only care about getting people into heaven. He cared about spirit, mind, and body. To me, health care isn’t simply helping the sick get well, but helping the well not get sick. (This is exactly my philosophy!!)

Can you draw a line between wellness and spirituality?

You can’t love if you don’t have the energy to love. If you go home every night and lie on the couch because you’re exhausted because you’re not eating right and your blood pressure is too high, well, how can you make a difference? I’m interested in helping my people be well so they can make a difference.

You call the Daniel Plan “the first piece of the puzzle.” Could you elaborate on that?

People say they want to work on their marriages, their careers, or get their finances in shape. If you can get your energy level up by living healthier, then you can say, “Now I can start working on my marriage. Then I can work on my finances or my career or my parenting.” We’re really starting at a base level.

Many aspects of the Daniel Plan are in other diet and fitness programs, too. What’s different?

Most people know what to do to get healthy. It’s not rocket science. The problem is that most people have the wrong motivation and therefore don’t stick with it. Why you do something always determines how long you do it. So we give people spiritual motivation. There’s nothing wrong with saying, “I want to live longer.” But why do you want to live longer? We say, “Change your life and change the world.”

Last spring, after the death of your son, you experienced a setback in your personal health goals. What do you say to others who struggle with relapses?

When Matthew died, my wife and I went through a period of four months of grief. I didn’t want to exercise. The church would bring us all kinds of great food—far more than we could eat—and I started adding back some of the weight I’d lost. My reaction was to be open about it. When I say, “You know what guys? I just experienced a setback in my life, and I put 20 pounds back on,” that actually encourages people. They don’t want to hear about the guy who lost the weight and kept it off forever.

How does using the church congregation for support factor in?

A lot of diet plans don’t have the community component—the friends component. What we’ve found is that people who pursue any kind of life change with the help of a group change far faster, and are more likely to stick with it, than people who do it on their own.

You can read the entire interview at Parade.com as well as link to an excerpt from the book.

Stay tuned to The Daniel Plan coming to a church near you!

Automated External Defibrillator
located near office door. Look for overhead AED sign.
Phone is on the adjacent wall.
To call for help, press an outside line and dial 911.
Circle of Friends
Join us at 9:30am on Wednesday, January 15
No meeting in December
Questions? Email Mary Anne Rebernak at mrebernak@yahoo.com

Pottawatomie Partnership
Renovations have started on house #13, 1620 S. 13th Ave, St. Charles. Volunteers are needed each Saturday at 8:30am. Work has begun on roof shingle replacement, garage clean-out and interior clean-up of the house.

Food on the 4th
Please bring non-perishable food for the St. Charles Salvation Army & Elburn Food Pantries on the fourth Sunday of the month.
DEC. 22–Protein Canned meats (tuna, chicken, turkey, ham), Spam, corned beef.

Intentional Travel 2014
“Treasures of Northern Italy”
Our sixth Intentional Travel adventure returns to the beautiful lakes, mountains and coast of Northern Italy. We will visit the Lake District of Lake Como, Cinque Terre on the coast and enjoy the unique city of Vénice. The dates are October 5 - 18, 2014. Travel itinerary and registration forms are on the bulletin board near the office. Now is the time to send in your reservation for next year’s Italy trip. An informational meeting will be after church (10:30) on December 8. Join us.

On a chilly, Thursday evening, Nov. 7, six of us set out to share food with our friends in the Pilsen neighborhood. The site was an unwelcoming, dark industrial area, but a line had already formed and was waiting for us.

Suddenly lots of folks, many with small children, joined them. We estimated we served approximately 80 guests that night.

The soup was perfect for the cold night, warm and filling. I heard so many say how good it was- "real chicken, veggies, not from a can" were a few of the comments. To all who shared their soup-making talents this was a 5-star, rave review! The people in line were incredibly polite, and we heard many "thank you's, God bless you, and thanks for coming!"

Quite an experience for all of us.

One of many memories of the evening will remain with me for a long time. A small boy, wide-eyed and shy, looked over the table. It was love at first sight! He didn’t want soup, but when I mentioned that we also had cookies, he gave me a beautiful smile that touched my heart. He returned later and gave me one more special smile which I’d like to share with our Helping Hands group for baking those yummy cookies! God bless all of our church family for consistently offering food and support for The Night Ministry.

Barb Arloff

Many of our friends and neighbors that we meet and serve are artists, writers, poets and engaged in the arts. In a recent Night Ministry newsletter, I read the following poem written by one we serve.

Ann Richards

HOMELESS
What is a home?
If you’re homeless,
What do you lack?
A home isn’t always
A place to call your own,
A hot meal or a warm blanket,
A home is not always
A mom and a dad
A dog
A stocking hung by the fireplace
At Christmas.
A home can be
A friend you crash with
Or a pillow in box
Either way,
We’re not homeless
We have a home
Just not a house.

December 18 6:45pm

Please consider offering your time and talents towards our monthly dinner at Lazarus House. This is the perfect month to get your kids involved and give true meaning to the Christmas season! Our dinner is scheduled for December 18th. Please see the mission bulletin board in the hall to volunteer! If you have any questions, contact Nancy Scorby at 630.513.6910.
Mission Committee Christmas Giving

The Giving Tree is up with opportunities to give this season. There will be different tags with gifts for the following organizations:

- **Night Ministry**: long underwear and gift cards* (look for the red bulb tag)
- **Lazarus House**: Christmas wish tags from LH residents (look for yellow star tag)
- **Salvation Army**: Christmas wish tags from Salvation Army families (look for green Christmas tree tags)
- **Church Family fund**: gift cards* or financial donation towards the church fund which support members of our church community who are in need. (white church tag)

All gifts will need to be returned *UNWRAPPED* by December 15. The date is set so organizations can organize and distribute the gifts prior to Christmas. Special instruction: Please attach the paper ornament to the gift you have purchased when you bring it to church.

Thank you for including the Giving Tree in your Christmas celebration this year!

*All gift cards can be purchased through Manna- Manna Team will be ready and waiting for you in Fellowship Hall!

Mitten Tree is up in Fellowship Hall to collect gently used, homemade, new hats, gloves, scarves for the Salvation Army and Night Ministry.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing on Saturday, December 21 at the Blue Goose in St. Charles. Sign up on Mission Bulletin Board to give of your time.
Sanctuary & Church Christmas Decorations

The Worship Committee is accepting donations to provide Christmas decorations for the church and sanctuary. Your donation may be made in memory of or/and in honor of a person or people special to you and your family.

Please return this form to the office with your donation by December 8, 2013.

Thank you, The Worship Committee

PRINT CLEARLY Information will be printed in the bulletins on Dec. 22.

In HONOR of–name(s)___________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
and/or In MEMORY of–name(s)____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
GIVEN BY–your name(s)__________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Phone Number_______________________________

I would like to donate $___________ for Christmas Decorations.
Make checks payable to The Congregational Church.
This donation to the church is recorded on your giving statement.

(Office Use Only, Record on giving sheet, Acct #3201
Cash $___________ Check #___________)

Nick Odman’s New CD’s

Nick Odman has a New Classic Hits piano CD, and a southern Gospel Piano CD. A portion of each sale will go to Feed My Starving Children. There are order forms in the church office, or you can contact him.

Nick Odman
ndodman23@gmail.com
1-847-224-9854

Polar express

On December 21 at 3:30 in Fellowship Hall, there will be a Polar Express showing. We are asking families attending to please bring a box of hot chocolate to help get us all in the Christmas Spirit. And what’s a movie without popcorn?!? There will be popcorn for all our families as well. The Polar Express is a timeless movie that all ages would enjoy! Don’t forget to save the date and join in the Christmas Spirit! Bring comfortable seating for your family.
NEW BOOKS IN OUR LIBRARIES

THE ADULT LIBRARY


Reed, Mary Hutchings. Warming Up. The novel by lawyer, author, and playwright is recommended by The Night Ministry. “To read Warming Up is to enter a story that keeps you eager to know what ever-compelling twist is just beyond the next page.” Ten percent of the author’s proceeds are donated to The Night Ministry.

Grafton, Sue. W is for Wasted. Recommended by Sandy Mohn. An editorial reviewer said, “Grafton is a writer of many strengths—crisp characterizations, deft plotting, and eloquent dialogue among them. It is one thing to write 23 bestsellers, but quite another to do so while addressing larger societal ills.”

THE YOUTH LIBRARY

Estes, Eleanor. The Hundred Dresses. Recommended by Tassie Brautigam as a favorite book of hers. A book review by one reader said, “One day, after Wanda Petronski’s classmates laugh at her funny last name and the faded blue dress she wears to school every day, Wanda claims to own one hundred dresses, all lined up in her closet at her worn-down house.” In 2007, the National Education Association named the book one of its Teachers’ Top 100 Books for Children.

There is also a selection of holiday books on the tables in both libraries.

Ann Richards

Organ Donor Concert
Saturday, January 11, 7pm, Sanctuary

In the Summers of 2012 and 2013 Beiermann Music & Friends organized and performed benefit concerts for leukemia research. Bringing the idea of raising funds for a specific cause closer to home, the Beiermann’s have scheduled a benefit concert for “Organ Donors” on Saturday, Jan 11, 2014. The “closer-to-home” connection is that profits from this concert will be directed to needed repairs for our church organ. Recently the church council approved partial funding for necessary repairs for our now 15-year-old and one-of-a-kind instrument. Unfortunately, only about one-half of the necessary repairs/maintenance were able to be completed back in October.

Participants in this gala January 11 event will include students and adult colleagues of the Beiermann School of Music, many of whom have participated in the professional quality theater performances presented in our own Fellowship Hall during the last 3 years. At the request of the performers involved, this program will feature “show-tunes”. An orchestra of area string and wind students will accompany the various solo/ensemble selections.

Additionally, to add some element of legitimacy to the title of the event, the necessary forms will be available at this concert for interested persons to actually become organ donors through the State of Illinois.

As is typically a Beiermann and CUCC tradition, there will be a reception following the concert with appetizers and desserts. Suggested donation for tickets will be $15 but any contributions will be accepted. Advance tickets will be available at Sunday Coffee Fellowship or at the church office. For additional information contact denise@beiermannmusic.com

We hope that many church members will attend this worthwhile and entertaining event. Come and bring a friend (or several).
**CUCC WEEKLY Wednesday BLAST**  The Church Weekly Blast is intended to be a quick reminder of events that are happening in the next week or two. Please submit BLAST copy to the church office using 25 words or less. Most BLAST information will be published for only 2 weeks. Detailed information about events can be found in the Highlight Newsletter, the bulletin insert, on the church web site and on the online calendar. (Click on the event and information will appear.)

**Men’s Fellowship Walking Group**  
3rd Saturday of each month, 7am (Dec. 21)  
Contact George Mohn for information and location. 847-488-9179, sangeomohn@att.net

**2014 Peaceful Heart Yoga**  
with Donna Burg  
New session beginning  
January 6 – March 24  
10 weeks, $100  
$12 per week (drop in)  
Pay at Class  
No class Jan. 20, Feb. 17

Are you one of the many people who have wanted to try our Peaceful Heart Yoga, but were hesitant to sign up? Peaceful Heart Yoga is intimate without being intimidating, and the gentle classes will leave you feeling long, strong and de-stressed! We welcome and encourage you to try Peaceful Heart Yoga! Sign up on the Congregational Life board.

**Our Church is holding a Blood Drive!**  
Please consider donating on January 12.

You can sign-up for an appointment online by clicking the link in the drive name below or call Bob Brautigam at (630) 222-2714.  
Sunday, 1/12/2014 (8:00 am - 12:00 pm)  
40W451 Fox Mill Blvd. in the Fellowship Hall

You may sign up on the Mission Bulletin Board or go online and accrue points toward gifts

(New: You will need to create an account in order to register your appointment in our new online system.)

Thank you for supporting our blood drive. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Swing Set’s Night Out**  
On December 6, Swing Set Preschool will be having their annual Swing Set’s Night Out. We will begin at Barnes and Noble in the Geneva Commons where you will find Miss Kim dressed up as Cat in the Hat, various teacher readings throughout the night, a crafting table to decorate book marks, a bead necklace for all the kids, try Santa’s Swing Set Surprise Hot Chocolate, free gift wrapping, and tons of Christmas gifts to choose from! Activities will end at 6:30 at Barnes and Noble, then we will head over to California Pizza Kitchen for dinner! All the proceeds from this night help Swing Set to purchase supplies to make all the wonderful Christmas gifts we give this season! We hope to see you all there!

Please consider getting the Highlight Newsletter as a PDF by email. Send your email address to office@uccstc.org.

**New Members**  
will be received on Feb. 2 at either service. The evening orientation class will be held at 7:30pm on Monday, January 27 in the Parlor. Contact the church office to receive information about the class.
Who’s in the Pews
Katelyn Keck by Lynne Hardison

Did your mother ever tell you “don’t play with your food”? Well, if Katelyn Keck’s mom, Ann, ever said that to Katelyn, it obviously didn’t sink in. “I’d rather not work with food, but play with food,” Katelyn smiled. “I like playing in the kitchen.”

Katelyn’s passion for “playing with food” started when she was young. “I’ve loved to cook since I was in third grade,” she said. “I’ve always known I wanted to be a chef.” So after her 2007 graduation from St. Charles North High School, Katelyn headed to Johnson and Wales University in Denver, CO to cultivate her skills and earn a degree in Culinary Nutrition. “Johnson and Wales is primarily a culinary school, but it offered the overall college experience that I was looking for. I didn’t want to go where you just learned how to cook. I wanted a conventional education,” she said.

Along with her studies, Katelyn held several jobs. “Any job you can have in a restaurant, I’ve done. I did catering for a long time, front and back, and was also an RA. Typically I had 2 or 3 jobs while going through school. I was busy, but you have to pay the bills,” she laughed.

Inspired by one science teacher in particular, she briefly entertained thoughts of going into chemistry, but decided to stick with her first love-food.

She does use her chemistry knowledge in the kitchen and probably not more so than in her first job after her graduation in 2011. Katelyn went to work for a start-up company, Simply Pure, which made medical marijuana edibles such as dessert bars, various sauces, mango salsa and peanut butter.

“It was great to be able to use my science (chemistry) and math in this job. I never thought cooking could be so technical.” Then she added with a chuckle, “Reactions are quite varied when people hear about that job.”

Not your typical Chef, Katelyn was under surveillance 24 hours a day as everything the company did was sanctioned and licensed by the government. “The government knows every little detail of my life,” she explained. “But it was worth it for the opportunity.” It was also worth it to know her creative cooking was helping people in severe pain. “Cancer patients would tell us that they never felt such relief until they tried our products.”

Katelyn was head chef when financial issues forced the small company to dissolve. “It was really a great experience,” she said. “I saw it through the highest and lowest moments.”

After a stint at what Katelyn called a “hippy restaurant” in Boulder, she came home to St. Charles about a year ago and stepped right back into her involvement at the church. “It’s a hub for me,” said Katelyn, who has taught Sunday School, worked in the nursery and gone on all 4 work tours with GF. “It’s a home I can always come back to. The congregation couldn’t be a nicer set of families. I struggled in Colorado. Our church has something special.”

Last spring, she went on the GF work tour, but this time as an adult. “I went on my first work tour as a student and my first work tour as an adult to the same place, the Duvall Home. And with the same friends both times. It was a great reunion,” smiled Katelyn, who proclaimed Suzy and Jeff irreplaceable. She also came back from college to go on the Dominican Republic work trip.

Katelyn is now serving on the mission committee and has participated in the Night Ministry. “I’m seeing behind the scenes,” she said. “People work very hard in our church. I’m very appreciative of the people I’ve worked with.”

Being back in St. Charles has also opened the door for other opportunities. She got a taste of organic farming, which is a possible long term goal, when she worked at Heritage Farm this summer. “I applied to be a farmer, but when they found out my background, they called and asked me to please apply for the kitchen instead.” That job was cut a bit short, however, as the chance to travel came along and who could pass up a trip to Europe for 16 days with her sister, Sabrina, and a friend of theirs?

“I love to travel. I don’t see myself living in one spot. I feel like I’ll be living in many different places throughout the world. That’s my goal anyway,” said Katelyn, the adventurer. “Of all the places we visited on our trip (Rome, Vienna, Prague, Hungary, Romania), Turkey was my favorite,” she said. “It was so beautiful. The people were so nice and they had the best food.” She should know!

The girls went surfing through Europe-Couch Surfing that is. I’d never heard of it, but Katelyn explained that you can go online and find people who are willing to put you up on their couch for the night for free. “It certainly makes traveling more affordable,” she said. “My parents were a little nervous.” I can certainly understand that!

The majority of “couchkeepers” were young people around Katelyn’s age and you could check them out before you committed to being their “couch potato”. “They would show you around and take you to places in their towns that we would never have found on our own. It was the coolest experience I’ve ever had.”

After her European journey, she traveled to Columbia. But it was what she had “cooking” while she was working and traveling this past year, that could turn out to be the adventure of her life.

“It’s good that I came home. It gave me the opportunity to apply for the Peace Corp,” she knocked me over with that one. “I’m not really sure what initially sparked the interest, but I applied and now I’m going. Suzy was a big part of the decision making. She talked me through it.”

She leaves for Africa in February for 3 months of training in Accra, the capital of Ghana, and then 24 months of service somewhere in Africa. “I don’t know where my service will be,” she said. “You don’t get a choice. You go wherever the need is.”

Currently studying an African tribal language, she will have to integrate with them. “You make and live equivalent to the locals so you feel you’re one of them.” She gets 2 vacation days a month and after a few months she can use that time. She hopes to be able to visit countries close by. “I won’t be coming back to the U.S. while I’m there.” And she told me that the closest American could possibly be a day’s travel away.

“I think I’m going to have a great time, but I am nervous,” she admitted.

Nominated for the agricultural sector, she still doesn’t know exactly what she’ll be doing. “I don’t think I’ll be cooking. I hope I don’t forget how.”

One thing is for sure, she won’t forget her recipes because she doesn’t use them. “I feel more drawn to making art with food than I do with feeding people in mass quantities. I love art and I feel like my food is the best way I can convey it. Now how to make that into a job is the question. Like a starving artist who never grows hungry.”

Katelyn is as diverse and interesting as, I’m sure, her cooking is. I’d love to pull up a chair and chat with her again while she plays in my kitchen.
You are welcome

Striving to increase our love for God and neighbor, we welcome persons of every age, health condition, race, marital status, economic status, sexual orientation and religious background.

We encourage you to become an active member of our church, sharing your God-given gifts in all areas of church life: worship, education, mission & ministry.

Sunday worship schedule

8:30am Brief Worship Service (½ hour)

9:30am Worship Service with Sunday School
Sunday school for children through 7th grade. Nursery care. Communion offered the first Sunday of each month. Dec. 29. No Sunday School and No Nursery

Mission Statement
We, as a community in Christ, shall provide and administer a continuum of opportunities for worship, education, fellowship & outreach.

It is our mission to serve individual, local, national & world needs.

Staff

Rev. Dr. John R. Rodgers–Senior Minister
Rev. Suzy R. Daly–Associate Minister
Rev. Patricia G. Kitten-Assistant Minister
Patti Molloy, RN–Parish Nurse
Tassie Brautigam–Children’s Ministry Coordinator
Kim Barth, Connections Coordinator
Carleen Bart–Tricia Steele, Office
Rosemary Kagel–Financial Manager
Carolee Bart–Teresa Steele, Office
Denise Beiermann–Music Director
Denise Beiermann–Bell Choir Director

Please pray for them on their December Birthdays.

Joe Bihner 1
Madison Bondi 1
Barb Biddle 2
Emma Juby 2
Jacob Schuster 2
Hailey Warner 2
Henry McGray 3
Scott Gregory 4
Dave Beckman 5
Rob Van Dintor 5
Mary Lou Bracken 6
Sheila Albano 7
Mark Rerk 7
Michelle Tims 7
James Vial 7
Mark Bishop 8
Sue Hamer 8
Connie Rohlman 8
Gerry Riddle 8
Andrea Williams 8
Denise Beiermann 9
Paige VanBergen 9
Sam Provencher 9
Cheryl Gaydos 10
Bob Bendich 11
Molly McCullough 11
Denise Beiermann 11
Steve Wascher 13
Mary Ann Gocheaux 13
Carol Hundley 14
Bob Gust 15
Joanne Olson 15
Sam Provencher 15
Richard Savas 15
Makenna Collins 16
Jimmy Schultheiss 16
Abigail Freedlund 18
Mega Lly 18
Mary Ann Gocheaux 18
Aliy Piper 18
Tegan Reyes 18
Bill Channon 19
Natalia Fernandez 19
Jordan Hayes 19
Chuck Reed 19
John Pokorski 21
Quinn Sidor 21
Cameron Claps 22
Chris Claps 22
Jacob Dieckman 22
Chip Fleischer 22
Gianna Schroeder 22
Lisa Sidor 22
Andrew Van Dintor 22

Graham Altergott 23
Connor Collins 23
Mackenzie Fairchild 23
Fritz Gloege 23
Michael Mastalski 23
Rob Melzer 23
Bryn Moore 23
Jack Amstutz 23
Carol Fry 24
Kyle McKintrick 24
Mary Jane Timm 24
Rachael Freedlund 24
Bradley Hemmingsen 24
Karen Balzanto 24
Mary Carol Smith 24
Carol Vial 24
Katie Burke 24

Stephanie Salb 27
Abigail Freedlund 28
Mega Lly 28
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Aliy Piper 28
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Chip Fleischer 31
Gianna Schroeder 31
Lisa Sidor 31
Andrew Van Dintor 31

MARK BISHOP  8
MADISON KLEBA  13
ADAM DORIO  13
DEBRAH HEMMINGSENE  13
KAREN BALZANTO  18
MARY CAROL SMITH  17
CAROL VIAL  17
KATIE BURKE  18

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<td>2nd Sunday of Advent</td>
<td>9:00 AM - 7:30 PM Language Stars-Mandarin</td>
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