



"Developing Followers of Jesus Christ to Serve the World"

# Tidings

Union United Methodist Church, Belleville, IL

April 30, 2026



Dear families and friends of Union,

I have been at Union for less than a year, and already we have experienced two scam emails sent to our congregation. Someone created a fake email account that looked almost exactly like mine and sent messages to people. What is especially troubling is that the sender seemed to know our relationship—that I am your pastor and you are the congregation—and wrote in a way that sounded very real, like something I might send.

This is not new to me. When I was serving as a District Superintendent, a similar scam targeted pastors in my district, asking them to send gift cards because "I was in need." It sounded urgent and personal.

One pastor responded right away. He cared. He trusted. He acted out of love. A few days later, something didn't feel right, so he called me. That is when we discovered it was a scam. He felt deeply embarrassed and kept saying, "I should have known better."

We met in person, and I gave him a small gift and a note—not to repay him, but to honor his heart. I told him, "Please don't be ashamed. Your response came from compassion. I might have done the same."

Friends, this is important: when someone is scammed in this way, it is not a failure of intelligence. It is often a reflection of kindness. Sometimes scammers use fear or urgency to take advantage of that kindness. But kindness is not something we should lose.

At the same time, we are called to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16, NRSV). Here are a few simple reminders:

- Be cautious of urgent requests, especially for money or gift cards.
- Double-check email addresses carefully—even small differences matter.
- Avoid clicking on suspicious links, especially those about deliveries or unknown transactions.
- If something feels unusual, pause and verify by calling the person directly.
- Never feel pressured to act quickly without confirmation.

Most importantly, if you have ever been deceived in this way, please do not carry shame. God sees your heart and knows your intention. You are not the one who did wrong.

As a church, we are a community built on trust, generosity, and love. We will not let fear take that away. May we remain people who love boldly, even in a complicated world, and walk wisely, protecting the goodness God has placed within us.

With gratitude for each of you,  
Pastor Angie

3  
Church  
Worship in the Park

5  
Journey

6  
UWF

10  
Music Tidings

---

United Women in Faith  
10:00 am  
Krause Room  
2nd Wednesday  
(not January, April or July)  
*Special events posted in  
Tidings and the bulletin*

United Methodist Men  
Third Wednesday 5:30 pm  
Krause Room

Ruth Circle  
Quilters/Stitchers  
Each Thursday 9:00 am  
Krause Room

Horticulture  
Each Wednesday, 9 am  
Coffee, 8 am  
Krause Room

Junior Church  
(Kindergarten – 4th Grade)  
Junior Church is held during the  
9:00 am worship service

## Save the date for VBS

### SonForce Kids

SonForce Kids will be charged with the duties of trusting in God's plans, uniting with God's people, training for God's service, following in God's path and leading others to God's promise.

Dates:

Monday, July 27th - Friday, July 31st  
from 6:00-8:00 pm.

Any questions, please contact Jane Peters 618-406-7607



## Miracle Sunday – May 17

### One Church. One Sunday. One Purpose.

United Methodists around the world are coming together for *Miracle Sunday* on May 17, 2026—a shared effort to strengthen theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines.

The Council of Bishops has already led the way with a remarkable commitment of \$414,208, offering a powerful example of generosity and faith. Their leadership reminds us that investing in theological education is investing in the future of the church.

In many parts of the world, pastors are serving in challenging contexts marked by poverty, conflict, and rapid change—often with limited access to formal training. Through Miracle Sunday, we have an opportunity to come alongside them, helping equip leaders with the wisdom, courage, and spiritual grounding needed for faithful ministry.

This is more than a special offering—it is a shared act of discipleship. Together, we are raising up leaders who will guide the church with hope and strength. We invite you to pray, learn, and give as you feel led.

Together, we can be part of something meaningful and lasting.

**Dinner & The Word** will resume on the first Friday of June (June 5th) to watch "The Chosen"; Season 2, Episode 3. We will meet at Bruce & Marjie Simms' home at 6pm. We will enjoy a potluck (bring a dish that begins with the letter of your name--example: Simms can bring salad, or spaghetti, or strawberries). Please RSVP by June 3rd.

Everyone is welcome.

Simms address is 1745 St. Andrews Dr., Shiloh. Marjie's phone number: 618-623-9279.

## THIS IS YOUR PRAYER CORNER

*"All this I have spoken while still with you – but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14: 25-27*



**What This Means For Us:** Jesus speaks these words to His disciples as He prepares them for His departure. He promises that the Holy Spirit — the Counselor — will comfort all believers through the gift of peace - not a fragile or temporary peace, but the deep, abiding calm that comes from knowing that God is present among us and in control according to His will. The message is simple but profound: You are not alone, you are not forgotten, and you need not be afraid.

**Thought for the Week:** Let your heart rest in the truth that God is providing the help you need. The Holy Spirit walks with you, speaks to you, strengthens you, and brings peace where fear once lived. You will not face the challenges of the coming week alone — God is with you and He is working in ways that your heart and soul will understand in time.

**Prayer for the Week:** Spirit of comfort, Spirit of light, stay with our hearts through the day and the night. Whisper Christ's words when our courage grows thin, remind us His peace is alive deep within. Calm every storm that may rise in our soul, steady our steps as You lead and console. Guide us, Oh Spirit, wherever we roam; cover us with wings that will carry us home.

## Tidings

Union United Methodist Church  
721 East Main Street  
Belleville, Illinois 62220  
618-233-6375

Pastor: Rev. Angie Lee

Thel Lemons, Editor

Please attach copy to email or text  
the information to the editor:

chefthel@aol.com  
618/530-8435

**Upcoming Tidings  
deadlines (12 pm):**

**May 29**

**June 26**

**July 31**

On Tuesday, May 12th, all men of Union Church are invited to Edley's BBQ, 531 West Highway 50, in O'Fallon. No reservation needed, just show up at 11:30 for great food and conversation! If you have any questions, contact Joe Milton, 618-235-5344 or joseph.milton@att.net.

SAVE THE DATE

When: June 14, 2026, 11 am

What: Worship in the Park

Where: Rail Car and Depot, Scheve Park in Mascoutah

*Belleville Union, Freeburg Journey and Mascoutah Bethel are having Worship in the Park with a picnic lunch to follow.*

Fried chicken will be provided, and we are asking Union members to bring side dishes, Journey to bring salads and Bethel to bring desserts. Suggested donation to offset the cost of the chicken is \$5.00 per person. Children 10 and under are free.

Bring your own beverage, lawn chairs, and sunscreen. You may also bring lawn games and toys – please no bounce houses.

The theme of our picnic is America 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration -Celebrating Together – Union, Journey and Bethel.

T-shirts to commemorate the occasion will be available for purchase, if desired. Each church will have order sheets available with further details. If you do not wish to purchase a t-shirt, just plan to wear red, white and/or blue that day.

Please bring serving utensils with your dish to pass.  
We will have the rail car, depot and adjacent pavilion from 9 am to 3 pm that day.

Journey and Bethel will set up prior to the service and Union will do the clean up after the picnic.



**America 250 Anniversary Celebration T-Shirt Order Form**

Thank you for your interest in our America 250 Celebration T-shirts!  
Wearing the T-shirt at the church picnic is optional.

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone / Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Available Color:**

- Heather Blue
- Sand

**Available Size:**

- Youth: YS YM YL
- Adult: XS S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL

**Price:**

- \$15.00 (Youth – Adult 2XL)
- \$18.00 (3XL and above)

Name	Color	Size

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:

Cash      Check (payable to: Union UMC, memo: "T-shirts")

Notes:

Important dates for ordering t-shirts:

Payment due with order by May 15

T-shirt pickup available at church after June 7



RSVP for Worship in the Park June 14

Please respond by May 31 with the number of your party planning to attend.

A donation box will be available at the event for donations which will offset the cost of the chicken.

Suzanne Hutcherson is now serving as UUMC's Prayer Ministry Coordinator and will now be responsible for collecting future prayer requests. If you have a prayer request that you would like to include on our weekly distribution list, please send it to Suzanne via email: [suzannehutcherson@att.net](mailto:suzannehutcherson@att.net). You may also leave a message on her landline phone: 618-235-3793 and she will promptly return your call.



---

### News from Mascoutah Bethel

Our youth group, *Chosen Youth*, meets on the final Sunday of every month at Bethel UMC from 5 to 6:30 PM.

Our Wednesday Bible Study will have had its final meeting by the time the next issue comes out. It will start up again August 5th. Additionally, we will be setting up a Men's Bible Study in September (tentatively September 12th).

We will be having Confirmations on both May 3rd and May 10th.

Worship in the Park - A joint church picnic with Bethel, Journey, and Union UMCs on June 14th from 11 AM to 3 PM in Scheve Park, Mascoutah.

We will be celebrating Bethel's 185th year anniversary during Homecoming this year.



### Hobby Time

Room 211  
4:30 pm – 7:30 pm

These are open times;  
you are welcome to come and go as you please.

Bring your portable hobby, a snack, and a friend for fellowship and fun as you work on a project. *Please contact Becky Keiser, 618-795-0317 for more information.*



A heartfelt thank you to my church family for the prayers, cards, and kind words at the sudden loss of my sister, Lillian Herter. It proves once again how truly blessed I am to be part of this congregation. Blessings, Sheri Hill

### Looking to learn some new skills?

Union is looking to strengthen our "Bench Strength". What do I mean by that? We would like to train additional people interested in learning how to operate various audio and visual functions we have around the church.

- Ever wonder how the "The Board" functions during a service?
- Ever have a meeting scheduled in any of the rooms or the gym?
- What do you do if you need to use a computer, video display, or sound system?

We have a few people who have the knowledge to set things up and run the various systems, but we need to train a few more so that Union is flexible and has trained personnel who can step up and help when needed.

If you are interested in learning some new skills and would like to be part of the "Union Bench," please contact Mark Tiemann ([mark.d.tiemann@att.net](mailto:mark.d.tiemann@att.net)), or Dick Frette ([dick@unionumc.org](mailto:dick@unionumc.org)), or Mike Engel ([mikeengel49@yahoo.com](mailto:mikeengel49@yahoo.com)).



Raise Right Order: Sunday, May 3

Delivery: May 10

10:00 - 10:15 at the Welcome Desk  
(check or exact cash)

Please visit [RaiseRight.com](http://RaiseRight.com) for a full list of retailers or contact Stephanie Pierce at 618-406-7960 for more information.

---

Aldersgate  
Fellowship Group



**MUSICALS AT THE  
KIRKWOOD PERFORMING  
ARTS CENTER**

Aldersgate Fellowship plans to attend two musicals at *Stages St. Louis*, located at the Kirkwood Performing Arts Center. All members of Union are invited. "Guys and Dolls" is August 16th, followed by "Come From Away" on October 11th.

If ten people attend a show, the Group Rate is \$55.00 per person. We plan to go to dinner after the shows. Sandy Patrick has 15 tickets set aside for each performance. You may attend one or both shows. Sandy will take paid reservations until July 1st, with checks payable to "Sandy Patrick." Please contact Sandy, [sspats43@gmail.com](mailto:sspats43@gmail.com) or 618-719-6267, if you have any questions.



JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR  
DREAMCOAT at UNION  
Saturday evening, JUNE 27  
Sunday morning, JUNE 28, 9 am service  
AUDITIONS: MAY 9 and 10 at 1 pm



UWF volunteers at "Just Desserts", sponsored by Southwestern Illinois Violence Prevention Center



The Worship Committee encourages you to get involved! Volunteers are always needed for the following at the 9:00 service:

**Liturgists** (read scripture and Call to Worship)  
please contact Lisa Koerkenmeier at  
koer1922@gmail.com or 618-979-2085

**Ushers**  
please contact Danny Nollman at nollmandl@att.net or  
call 618-334-0320

**Greeters**  
please contact Judy Eckert at judy.eckert@eckerts.com  
or 618/476-1757



**What In God's Name Is Happening at Freeburg Journey**

I was really touched by all our friends from Union who came to either our Good Friday service or Lunch Bunch. If that was you, I noticed, and it was appreciated. We are looking forward to our next First Wednesday Dinner. The theme will be a Taco Bar, and our guest speaker will be Dawn Putnam from Moms On a Mission. Moms is a grassroots nonprofit that serves homeless, veterans, families, and more.



**EVERY WEEK:**

Worship - Sundays at 10:15 a.m. with Pastor Mike Olson and Journey Praise Band

College & Career Bible Study - Sundays at 12:00 p.m. with Jenny Olson 618-979-3937 or jolson@nashville-k12.org

The Chosen Bible Study at 6pm at Oberneufemanns' 618-978-5375

AA and Al-Anon - Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. Contact Eric G. 618-406-0366

**CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:**

May 6 – First Wednesday Dinner: Taco Bar; Guest Speaker: Dawn Putnam

"Cathy O"  
Cathy Oberneufemann  
Journey Worship Leader



UWF appreciates everyone who donated cookies and sandwiches for the spring tea on Palm Sunday. Thanks to everyone who helped set up, clean up, filled boxes for the shut-ins, served punch and goodies....the list goes on and on.

Thank you for making this a special event.

*Jo Ellyn Lynn and Sandy Patrick*



Union's United Women of Faith (UWF) has been busy again this month with more meals served, more Bible study, and more outreach to the community. We served a

Wednesday evening meal, spent time in fellowship and prayer in our small group circles, and helped spread the word of God to our community at the "More Than Just Desserts" event to help raise funds for the Violence Prevention Center.

Our next meeting is May 13 at Jane Peters home. The program, Spiritual Reflection, will be led by Laura Koehler. More information on its way. Elizabeth Circle has May's card ministry.

Please be in prayer for our members who will attend Assembly mid-May: Nancy Weston, Marjie Simms, and Sheri Hill.

You will also want to mark your calendar for June 10—our annual Luau Party at Karen Milton's, 6-8 pm. The Leadership Team is the host.

If you are looking for a fun group of Christian women to be a part of, we will welcome you with open arms! Just be prepared for lots of fun and laughter, spiritual growth, and a growing understanding of the life Jesus has in mind for you!

Keep praying, Marjie



**Mary Circle** meets the 2nd Sunday of every month (unless noted otherwise) from 10:30 -11:00 am.

Contact Stephanie Pierce, 618-406-7960, for more information.



Join us for coffee and fellowship in McKinley Hall following 9:00 am worship.



NATIONAL  
**CHILD ABUSE**  
PREVENTION MONTH

## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month!

Children should be able to live free from all forms of abuse and maltreatment and this year the UWF child

advocacy team will focus on Cyber Abuse resources to help church members and the community support online safety and prevent online abuse.

- **Types of Online Cyber Abuse:** Online harms include cyber bullying, exploitation, child sex abuse materials (CSAM), harmful artificial intelligence (AI) generated content and predatory adults that target children (Ferguson, 2026).
- **Statistics:** Unfortunately, online harm and abuse is pervasive, has serious consequences for youth and has been linked to youth suicide, sexual abuses and trauma. According to the National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction 2023 report, the number of children harmed by CSAM more than doubled from 2009 to 2022 and from 2016 to 2021. Cyberbullying is also common with more than half of youth reporting that they were bullied or harassed online in 2022. (NASW, retrieved 2026)
- **What can we do?** Be vigilant, ask questions, do not assume online content that is labeled "for children" is free from predators and other forms of harm. The CyberTipline <https://report.cybertip.org/reporting> accepts reports of child exploitation. Reports can be submitted in minutes and providing contact information is optional!
- **Additional Resources:** Association of Professionals Solving the Abuse of Children (APSAC) <https://apsac.org/>; Children and Screens, <https://www.childrenandscreens.org/>; National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, <https://www.missingkids.org/home>; National Children's Advocacy Center, <https://www.nationalcac.org/>; Online Child Exploitation Prevention Initiative, <https://icactaskforce.org/OCEPI>

In Faith, Janel Morey-Sassano and Erin May, UWF Child Advocates

Union UMC live stream services

### 9 am service:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Kent5122>

or later through YouTube

Union United Methodist Church,  
Belleville, Illinois

### 11:15 service:

<https://www.facebook.com/CrosswalkUnionUmc>

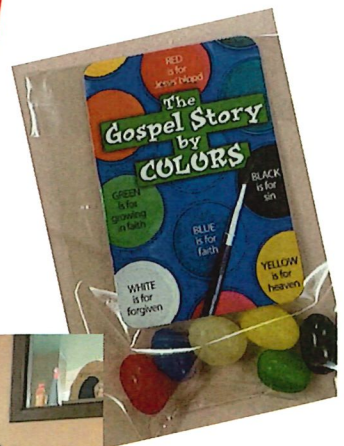
Easter Story activities, Sunday, March 22.



3rd and 4th grade Easter project: tomb of Jesus - Easter morning the kids move the stone to see HE isn't there.

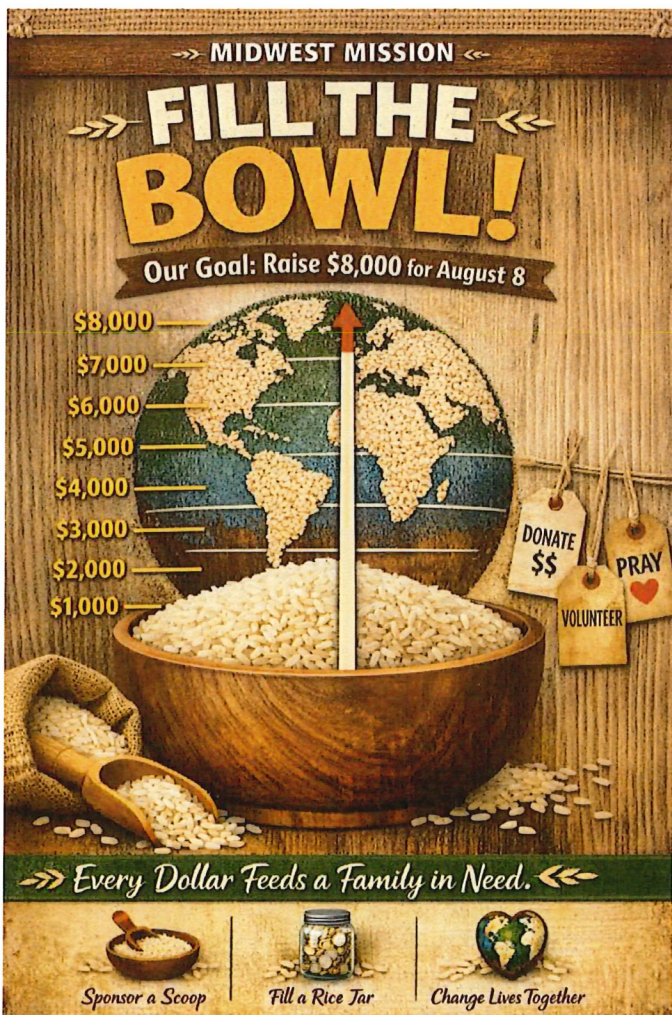


Children/Youth choirs sing at March 22 services





At Kathy Thurston's surprise birthday party!



Save the date! August 8

## Visitation and Other Good Stuff with Rev. Dr. Joe Scheets

May 2026

Final in a Series of Special Editions

Previously: My "check engine light" came on early in 2025. Following the advice of my wife and a few relevant medical doctors, I was on an unforeseen short leave of absence early in 2026. I had asked for your prayers regarding my prostate cancer diagnosis, surgery, and recovery.

Now: A recent follow up appointment confirmed what the surgeon suspected to be true right after that surgery: I am cancer free.

The word "grateful," even if accompanied by fireworks, would be an inadequate expression of my response.

That includes my appreciation for your prayers and the variety of ways you've reached out to Patty and me during this time.

As you may have heard me say a time or twenty-thousand, God's still in business and by God's grace so are we!

Which brings me to: More than ever, it's an honor being in ministry with you.

Being back in the saddle again for almost three months now...doing what God's calling me to do...and understanding in a fresh way how connected we are...all of that and more combine to give me a fresh sense of renewal this side of Easter.

You have helped favorite Scriptures like **John 3:16, 17** and **John 10:10** resonate. You have helped bring verses like **Psalms 23:4** and **Psalms 139:14** to life. You have helped me see **Galatians 6:2** and **1st Corinthians 12** in action. You are amazing!

And in the final words of John Wesley, "Best of all, God is with us!" Amen?

Yours in Christ,  
Joe.

[joescheets3@gmail.com](mailto:joescheets3@gmail.com)

217.377.8049

[joescheets.com](http://joescheets.com)

Save the Date  
250th Liberty Celebration at Union  
Sunday, July 12  
10 am games - potluck at noon

## **Growing Together in Prayer at Union**

At Union, we believe in the power of prayer. Prayer is at the heart of who we are and how we live as a community of faith. It grounds us, guides us, and connects us more deeply with God and with one another.

Many of our small groups and committees begin and end their gatherings with prayer. Groups such as the Horticulture Club, Bell Choir, Elizabeth Circle, and UMM intentionally set aside enough time to pray together, sharing both joys and concerns.

The following are additional opportunities for those who feel called to be more deeply involved in prayer ministry. You are welcome to join us at any time. Please contact the coordinator if you would like to learn more.

### **Jericho Walk Prayer**

First Tuesday of each month, 9:00 am – Sanctuary

You will begin with a prepared written prayer. Then, walk one lap (about 100 steps), taking time for prayer and reflection. After completing seven laps, we will conclude together with a closing prayer, sometimes followed by singing.

Coordinator: Angie Lee ([angie@union.org](mailto:angie@union.org))

### **Prayer Group for Worship**

Every Sunday, 8:40 am – Sanctuary

You are invited to gather in a circle and pray for our worship services, asking God's presence to fill our time together.

Coordinator: Laura Koehler  
([koehlerlaura73@yahoo.com](mailto:koehlerlaura73@yahoo.com))

### **Welcome Center Lobby Prayer Corner**

Available 24/7 in the Welcome Center

Our Prayer Corner offers a quiet and meaningful space for prayer and reflection. Prayer requests are shared by our sack lunch and food pantry guests, as well as members of our congregation.

At the round table in the Welcome Center, you will find our Prayer Corner, marked by a symbol of prayer and the cross. Each week, a devotional message titled "*This Is Your Prayer Corner*" is provided, including a Bible verse, a short prayer, a reflection, and an inspirational poem.

Flameless votive candles are also available. You are invited to light a candle as you offer a prayer concern or remember a loved one. Your prayer becomes part of our shared worship and witness.

Please feel free to stop by the Prayer Corner before the 9:00 am service. It is a sacred space prepared for you.

Coordinator: Suzzane Hutcherson  
([suzannehutcherson@att.net](mailto:suzannehutcherson@att.net))



Union United Methodist Church  
721 East Main  
Belleville, Illinois 62220  
Return Service Requested

Non-Profit  
ORG/  
**PAID**  
U.S. Postage  
Belleville, Illinois  
Permit #124

**Kick off for Union's  
250<sup>th</sup> celebration!**

Flag Day, June 14, 9 am service

Raise the Flag ceremony to begin  
our 250<sup>th</sup> celebration.

We will kick off our  
250<sup>th</sup> celebration with this  
ceremony before heading to  
Scheve Park in Mascoutah to  
enjoy the 3-Church Picnic and  
Worship. Plan to wear your red,  
white, and blue!

*See page 3 for more information*



Sundays at 11:15  
Chapel

[https://www.facebook.com/  
@Crosswalk.UnionChurch.Belleville](https://www.facebook.com/@Crosswalk.UnionChurch.Belleville)

**Music Tidings**



"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among all nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples."  
Psalm 96:1-3

**SUNDAY, MAY 3**

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem - "I Come With Joy, a Child of God"  
Wren/Marcus  
flutist: Cheryl Schaeffer  
Rev. Lee's sermon: "Serve Joyfully: The Joy of Serving Like Jesus"  
Mark 10:42-45; 1st Peter 4:8-11  
Communion

**SUNDAY, MAY 10, Mother's Day**

9 am - Children's Service; worship led by the Union Children & Youth

**SUNDAY, MAY 17, Miracle Offering Sunday**

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem: "Oh, Sing to the Lord a New Song" - Leavitt  
oboist: Dawn Striker  
Jubilation Handbells will ring the Prelude: "The Water is Wide, arr. by Philipps  
and the Postlude: "Ring Jubilee", arr. Geschke  
Rev. Lee's sermon: "Disciples Transform the World; Psalm 96

**SUNDAY, MAY 24, Pentecost Sunday**

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem: "Every Time I Feel the Spirit"  
spiritual/ Dawson  
Rev. Lee's sermon: "From Babel to Pentecost: The Spirit Who Unites";  
Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21

**SUNDAY, MAY 31**

9 am - Sanctuary Choir anthem: "Just a Closer Walk With Thee" - arr. Coates  
Aaron Eckert: trombone  
Rev. Lee's sermon: "Go in the Name of Father, Son, and Spirit";  
Matthew 28:16-20