

THE MESSENGER

Believing, Behaving, Becoming Like Christ

July 16, 2026

PASTOR'S CORNER

When summer arrived, I honestly thought life might slow down a little. School was out, vacations were beginning, and I figured we'd all have a chance to catch our breath. Well... so much for that! Over the past several weeks we've celebrated Patriotic Sunday, enjoyed fellowship at our church bowling event, continued planning for a new church directory, gathered to discuss the future of our church, and spent countless hours preparing for Vacation Bible School and our annual church picnic and more. Somehow, we're already talking about fall ministries and students heading back to school.

As I look back over the summer, one thing stands out to me. Ministry has a way of reminding us that every season holds both joy and sorrow. Along with all the exciting things happening around the church, we've also said goodbye to several beloved members of our church family. Walking with families through grief is never easy, but it has reminded me once again how special this church is.

I've watched you deliver meals, pray faithfully, offer encouragement, and simply be present for people when they needed it most. That's the Church at its best. Thank you for loving one another so well. Then, just days later, our hallways have echoed with the laughter of children during Vacation Bible School. I love that contrast!

Even in seasons of loss, God is still writing new stories. It was wonderful to welcome so many children from both our church and our community. One of my favorite parts of the week was getting soaked during game time with the kids. Between the heat and the water games, I think I ended up just as wet as they did! It was a joy to spend time with them outside of our normal Sunday routine. Thank you to everyone who made VBS possible! Whether you taught, decorated, served snacks, led worship, guided a crew, welcomed families, prayed behind the scenes, or helped in countless other ways, you made an eternal investment in the lives of those children.

I've also loved our Back to the Basics sermon series this summer. Returning to familiar passages has been a wonderful reminder that we never outgrow God's Word—we simply continue discovering new depth in it.

John 3:16. Proverbs 3:5-6. Matthew 6:33. Galatians 5. Philippians 4. These aren't just verses to memorize. They're truths to build our lives on. When life gets busy, when grief catches us off guard, or when we're facing difficult decisions, we don't always need something new. More often than not, we simply need to come back to what God has already said.

Maybe that's the lesson this summer has reminded me of most. God is faithful in every season.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving alongside you. It truly is a joy to be your pastor, and I believe God is doing something special here at First Christian Church. I'm excited to see what He has in store for us next.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Isaac



THE MESSENGER

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)

201 S. Main St., Paris, Illinois 61944

Phone: (217) 466-3255 • Email: office@fccparis.org

Web page: www.fccparis.org • Facebook: FCC Paris

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri, 9 AM-1 PM

Pastor Isaac Mahler, Senior Minister

COME WORSHIP WITH US

COFFEE BAR AT 8:00 AM • WORSHIP AT 9:00 AM • SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 10:15 AM

First Christian Church's mission is to grow disciples who are:

*"Believing in Christ,
Behaving as Christ,
Becoming like Christ"*

VBS 2026: Shining His Light!

A **HUGE** thank you to the over fifty volunteers who are pouring their hearts into making Vacation Bible School happen this week!

YOU are the reason our programs are successful, and **YOU** are the reason these children show up with big smiles every morning. **YOU** are the doers, the thinkers, the decorators, and the encouragers, and we simply cannot thank you enough.

Because of your dedication, we have reached approximately 70+ children this week with the beautiful, life-changing message that **"Jesus is the light of the world!"** You make the role of VBS Director feel incredibly rewarding and joyful.

Whether you donated food, gave financially, dedicated your time, helped behind the scenes, or lifted us up in your daily prayers—please know that **it all matters**, and it has made a world of difference. A special thank you to the **UNBELIEVABLE** team that helped decorate on Sunday afternoon! It was your four-hour frenzy of creativity that made our VBS areas bright and energetic for the children!

Join Us This Sunday!

Please plan to join us for worship this Sunday, July 19th, to celebrate a beautiful VBS week. You'll get to hear a full update on our attendance and VBS mission offering totals, hear the children sing the songs they've learned, and watch our kids serve the Lord in various positions throughout the service. We can't wait to worship together!

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CALENDARS!

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS:

- July 19th: All Church Picnic 11:30 AM
- July 20th: Bloodmobile @High Rise
- Jul 29-Aug 1st: New Directory Pictures
- Aug 6th: Elders Mtg 5 PM
- Aug 9th: Rural School Reunion
- Aug 10th: Staff Relations Mtg 6PM
- Aug 13th: Messenger
- Aug 15th: Disciple Men's Brkfst. 8AM

ALL CHURCH PICNIC

- JULY 19
- 11-2PM
- SPICER PAVILLION IN TWIN LAKES WEST PARK

WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU
THERE!



NEWS FROM THE PEWS

Paris Healthcare: Martha Stephen, Ron Odle, Chuck McClarey & Chuck Dean

Pleasant Meadows: Linda Driver

Twin Lakes: Irma Julian

Continued Prayers: Carol Winemiller, Brad & Dorothy Farnham, Marge Houghland, Jim Bennett, Betty Swanson, Karen Jobst, Sue Elliott, Anita Martin, Saunny Preston, Megan Mahler & the Fox Family.

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:13-14

JULY PRAYER

Lord, we just want to thank you for this day, for the blessings of life, and for all you have provided for us. Lord, we are also blessed to live in a country that is celebrating its 250th year of freedom. We just ask today that you might help people around this world learn to love and not hate, to help and not kill or torture, and to have empathy instead of fighting. We know, Lord, this is a big task, but we need your help. For this, we will proclaim that yours is the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The monthly blood drive will be held Monday, July 20th from 11:30AM -- 5:30PM at the High Rise in the Community Room.

Date	Worship Elder	Bread Elder	Deacons	Deaconess	Jr. Deacons	Ushers
July 19th, 2026	Dennis Thiel	Tammy Terry	Team #1	Nicole B	Team #1	Team #1
July 26th, 2026	Cindy Mathis	Angel Templeton	Team #2	Bev M	Team #2	Team #1
August 2nd, 2026	Ellen Webb	Steve Webb	Team #3	Megan M	Team #1	Team #2
August 9th, 2026	Lisa Young	Barb Free	Team #1	Joel G	Team #2	Team #2

COMPASSIONATE CLOTHING CLOSET

We are all set for our July volunteer month at the CCC! A huge thank you to everyone who committed to a shift. Please take a moment to check your calendar and make sure you are there for your scheduled spot. We appreciate you showing our church's support!



EDGAR COUNTY FAIR HOSPITALITY TENT

We will be manning the Hospitality Tent on Tuesday evening, July 21st from 6- 9PM. Sign-up sheet is available on the sign up desk.

SCARECROW PROJECT

As you begin to clean out your closets and drawers this summer, please remember to bring any long pants, shirts, or accessories to the church for our Scarecrow Project. The project takes place during Honey Bee weekend in September. See Coralie Smittkamp for further information if needed



LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found basket is full of all sorts of different items. Please stop by and check for items that may belong to you or your child.

CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Light, Koinonia and Circle of Prayer will all be off for the summer. Meetings will begin again in September.

NEW DIRECTORY



Don't forget to sign up for your photography session! The photography sessions will take place from July 29th to August 1st. You can easily sign up online by scanning the QR code or by visiting the sign-up sheets in the foyer. When scheduling online, use the church code **il477** and the password **fccparis26pics**.



DISCIPLES MEN

- The Disciples Men will meet this Saturday, July 18th at 8:00AM at the Paris Family Restaurant.
- On Thursday, July 30th the Disciples Men will be going to St. Louis for the Cardinals vs. Cubs game. Contact Tony Peel if you have any questions.

KID'S SUMMER SCHEDULE

As a reminder, to keep children engaged during the service on Sunday, you'll find our newly assembled "pew packets," packed full of fun, faith-filled activities. Additionally, our sweet preschool-aged children are always welcome in the nursery.

Looking Ahead

While we are soaking up every second of July, we are already looking forward to a meaningful autumn! Mark your calendars for **Promotion Sunday** in September. We will be celebrating our children moving up to their next classes, which will include presenting them with their very own Bibles. September will also mark the kickoff of our brand new **Junior Disciples** program! This program will give our younger children a special opportunity to step into leadership by helping with various service responsibilities. We can't wait to see how they grow! And, of course, **God's Gang will be coming back in September!** Be watching for the start date to be announced in August.



YOUTH GROUP FUTURE DATES

- July 19th: NO Youth Group & Club 3–5
- July 26th: Youth Group
- Aug 2nd: Youth Group & Club 3–5
- Aug 9th: Youth Group

KID'S CORNER

Summer has officially arrived, and with it, a wonderful whirlwind of children's activities! From the quiet discipleship of summer church camp to the joyful noise of a packed Vacation Bible School, our youth are actively living out their faith and filling our church with life.

Moments of Faith & Celebration

What a joy it has been to watch our young people grow in their faith this season. By the end of next week, a total of nine children will have experienced summer church camp! We are so grateful for their eager hearts and the chance for them to build lasting memories and deeper connections to Christ.

VBS Fun

Vacation Bible School is officially underway this week, and the energy is absolutely amazing—we have nearly 70 children attending!

This year, the kids are learning about who Jesus is. The theme is from John 8:12 “Jesus is the light of the world. Children are also learning the beautiful lesson of giving back. Our monetary VBS offering is going directly toward the new homeless shelter, **"House of Hope."** In addition, we are collecting daily food items to support our **local soup kitchen**. Thank you to everyone who has donated and supported these efforts; our kids are truly being the hands and feet of Jesus this week! If you would like to help toward our goal of \$750 you are welcome to bring your offering by the church!

VBS would not happen without an incredible community of help. A massive thank you to the 50 plus amazing volunteers, and especially my co-director Megan Mahler. You are the heartbeat of this ministry!

Please don't miss our special **Children's Sunday** worship service this week! It is going to be an incredibly special day as the children lead us, featuring VBS songs they learned this week and helping with many of the Sunday morning service responsibilities.

Thank you for continuing to bless me with the opportunity to serve First Christian Church.

Warmly,
Kim Woods