

April Messenger 2026

First United Methodist Church of East Peoria

154 E. Washington Street, East Peoria, IL 61611

Phone: 309-699-5417

Visit Us Online at www.epfumc.com

E-mail: Office@epfumc.org

♥ *Loving God* ♥ *Loving Others* ♥ *Living Our Faith*

Invite-Attend-Fellowship-Serve



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♥ *From the Pastor's Heart* ♥

He is Risen

HE is RISEN INDEED.

In the Early Church, with persecution from Rome and Jewish Temple authorities, this proclamation was said to get you into church services to show you were a believer.

In 1 Corinthians 15:17 Paul says,

“If Christ hasn’t been raised, then your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins, and those who have died in Christ are gone forever.”

But Paul does not end there. In verse 20 he says,

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first crop of the harvest of those who have died.”

These words remind us how we, as Christians, are called to live.

We are people of the Resurrection.

We are a people of Hope!

We can face the future unafraid!

East Peoria Church family, let us live lives of Hope. Let us show and live the Good News of Jesus the Christ. Tell others about how Christ changed your life. Through His love, let us not live lives of perfection, but lives filled with perfect love—lives with kindness, mercy, care, and love.

Let us not be filled with the raw meat of hate, anger, judgment, criticisms, but of the fruit of the Spirit.

As your Pastor, I believe East Peoria First UMC is going to be resurrected to a new purpose and mission in this coming year. Let us not just be trying to hold on and survive, but live the mission we have been called to live out.

Christ is Risen?

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Your friend,
Rev. Ted A.



HOLY WEEK SPECIAL SERVICES

Maundy Thursday - April 2 @ 7pm

Zion Evangelical UMC will be our guests here at East Peoria First UMC at 7:00pm.

We will observe this sacred occasion with Holy Communion and a special Hand Washing ceremony. Pastor Ted Newlan will bring the message.

Good Friday - April 3 @ 7pm

We will be at Willow Hill UMC in Germantown Hills for a powerful drama of the Disciple John and Mary the mother of Jesus. The Bridge UMC from Washington will be joining as well. This will be a powerful service to remember Jesus' death on the cross.

Easter Sunday - April 5 @ 9am

As we celebrate a Risen Savior, we will have music by our Bells and our praise band, Reborn. Friends for Mission will be serving their wonderful breakfast before and after the Worship Service. They only ask that you give a free will donation. There will also be an Easter Egg Hunt for children immediately after the service. Please invite people for this special service as we remember :

“Because He Lives” we can face tomorrow.

April Mission Offering

Our ‘noisy’ offering for every Sunday in April will benefit East Bay Camp which has been connecting people, nature, and Christ for nearly a century. East Bay offers summer camps for children of all ages, including Camp Hope, a medically supported camp for children with cancer, blood disorders, and other serious illnesses. The camp also host retreats for private groups. Its combination of deep historical roots, natural beauty, and ongoing ministry makes it one of the most significant and enduring camp ministries in the region.

Check them out at eastbaycamp.org.

APRIL SERMONS

April 5 (Easter Sunday):

“Because He Lives” (John 20:1-8)
Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

April 12:

“God Didn’t Say That” (Isaiah 43:1-7)
“Abraham Lincoln did not say, ‘The problem about quotes on the internet is that no one can confirm their authenticity.’ You would be surprised to read how many things so many people erroneously believe God has said.”
Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

April 19 (Earth Day):

A message about caring for God’s creation
Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

April 26:

“People of Head and Heart” (Matthew 22:36-40)
The first sermon in a new series entitled “Why be a United Methodist?”
Speaker: Rev. Ted A.

2026 Monthly Missions

May: South Side Mission

Jun: Red Bird Mission School

Jul: Heifer Project

Aug: SnackPac

Sep: Pathway Ministries—Naramore Dinners
(fka Peoria Rescue Mission)

Oct: The Baby Fold

Nov: Rock House Ministries

Dec: Helping Hands

Men’s Prayer Breakfast

The Men's Prayer Breakfast meets on the second Saturday each month at 8:00 am at the 520 Café in East Peoria.

This month it is on April 11.
Please contact Chuck Pierman to confirm your attendance.

Ladies' Luncheon

We're starting back up on April 18 at 11:30 at EP Avanti's. Mark your calendars! We will gather together on the 3rd Saturday of each month from April through November. Contact Bev Avery for questions and/or to reserve your seat.

Administrative Professionals Day

Wednesday, April 22nd is Administrative Professionals Day. It is a day to let our office staff know they are appreciated.

Tia Fielder
Jennie Reeves
Susie Hoskins
Terri Bridges

Graduate Information 2026

Attention parents and grandparents of graduates! We are looking for information for anyone graduating from 8th grade, high school, or college. Please stop outside the church office and provide us with some information (look for the clipboard) so we can recognize this great accomplishment. Also, please submit a picture of your graduate, via email (Office@epfumc.org), to be put in a future Messenger!

Deadline for this info is May 15th.

Red Bird Mission Trip

Friends for Mission are leaving on their mission trip to Red Bird Mission Camp in Beverly, Kentucky on June 6. They will return on June 12. The cost is \$500 per person. If interested, please contact Jim Vogel or Jamie Webb.

Sympathies

Our Deepest sympathies go out to the family of Vi Smith who passed away on Friday, March 6. Please keep the family in your prayers.

HELP NEEDED!!!

Jesus said suffer not the little children. We need YOUR help to keep our Children's Church adequately staffed. For safety purposes, we must have two volunteers with the children each Sunday.

All the materials are ready for you. All you have to do is show up! Please consider signing up for a Sunday on the sheet in the foyer.

Our children (and their parents) will thank you!!

Sunday Worship Services

Are you unable to attend our Sunday Worship Service in person but would love to be able to watch it every week? Did you attend and would like to see it again? Our weekly Worship Service is broadcast live to our Facebook page and remains there even after the Worship Service ends. The service is also available on YouTube and our website. For questions about how to access these various platforms, contact the church office.

REFRESH Service

Every Wednesday at noon our Church has a 30 minute service for you to Refresh yourself for the week. This Worship service has a devotion, prayer, and communion. This is a great opportunity to get you through to Sunday.

Giving Made Easy

Did you know you can setup your giving to be an automatic withdrawal, either monthly or semi-monthly? Withdrawals occur on the 3rd and/or the 17th each month. Sign-up is easy!

Stop by the church office and ask for an Electronic Giving form.

If You Are Ever in the Hospital

We call the hospitals every morning, but even if you specify that we be informed of your hospitalization, we are not always told. **Please call us** or have a relative or friend notify the Church. We want to know when you are ill so we can be praying for you.

Church Communication System

OneCallNow is the notification system we use to communicate church information to our congregation. If you do not currently receive church messages, such as closures, reminders, etc., but would like to, please contact the office. You can be notified by email, text and/or phone call.

Lost & Found Items

The lost and found is in the office. We keep lost & found items for 3 months and if not claimed, we dispose of or give away through the Food Pantry.

Current Items:

Gray ladies glove
Blue stocking hat
Collapsible umbrella

Reporting a New Address

Have you moved?
Please call the office at
309-699-5417 and let us know
your new address.

Nancy Briggs - New Address

100 Grand Victorian Place, Apt. 112
Washington, IL 61571

May Messenger Deadline

The deadline for the May 2026 issue of the Messenger is noon on Monday, April 20th. Send your submissions to office@epfumc.org or drop them off in the church office.

Your Church Staff

Rev. Ted A. Hartley, Directing Pastor
Cell: 217-330-0708

Office Manager, Tia Fielder
e-mail: office@epfumc.org

Ryan Klaus, Pianist/Organist

Bob Dietrich, A/V Coordinator

Meet the New Office Manager!



We have a new face in the church office!

Tia Fielder was born and raised in Decatur, Illinois. With a heart for service, Tia spent a significant part of her career in non-profit program administration.

She recently moved to East Peoria with her husband, James, who now serves on the IGRC cabinet. They join us from the Quad Cities, where he served as senior pastor and she served as office manager at Riverside UMC in Moline.

Tia became a “Methodist by marriage” when she and James wed in 2022. However, since becoming a United Methodist, Tia has jumped in with both feet. She currently serves as an at-large representative for the Annual Conference and as a lay speaker. At this year's Annual Conference, Tia will be recognized as a Certified Lay Minister. Also, this July she will assume the role of Certified Lay Ministry Coordinator.

In her spare time, Tia enjoys music, movies, travel, and trivia. She and her husband share three adult daughters—Najha, Asia, and Mikaela.

The new office hours are
Mon-Fri, 8:00am –2:00pm.

Church Office Hours

Monday—Friday 8:00 am—2:00 pm

Rev. Ted A. Hartley's Office Hours

| | |
|------------|---------------------|
| Monday: | 9:00 am to 1:30 pm |
| Tuesday: | 9:00 am to 11:00 am |
| Wednesday: | 9:00 am to 1:00 pm |
| Thursday: | 9:00 am to 11:00 am |
| Friday: | Day Off |

Please call ahead to make sure Pastor is in

Easter Is Coming!!

The Best Time to Invite Someone You Love!!

Friends, Easter is one of the most meaningful and hopeful Sundays of the year. It is also one of the easiest and most natural times to invite someone to church. Many people are more open than we think; they may simply be waiting for a gentle, caring invitation.

Sometimes we wonder, "How do I invite someone without feeling awkward?" We may worry about saying the wrong thing, or we may not want to make others uncomfortable. Those feelings are very common.

I speak from personal experience. There was a time in my life when I was not a Christian. But I began to wonder about church—what it was like and what was happening inside. I was curious, but also hesitant. No one invited me. Of course, I had not shared my thoughts with anyone, so people might have assumed that I was not interested in church. Still, in my heart, I was quietly hoping someone might ask. Finally, I gathered the courage to say to a friend, "Would you invite me to church?" I simply did not want to walk in by myself.

That experience has stayed with me. Sometimes people around us are much closer to faith than we realize. What they need is not pressure, but a gentle nudge and a caring friend. Invitation is most meaningful when it is authentic and relational—when it truly comes from the heart. People often respond not to perfect words, but to sincere love and simple kindness.

If you would like to try, here are three gentle steps:

Step One: Pray intentionally.

Think of two or three people God is placing on your heart. Pray for them by name. Ask God to prepare their hearts and yours. Scripture reminds us in Colossians 4:3 to pray that God may open a door for the message.

Step Two: Start an open conversation.

This does not need to be formal or heavy. Simply share from your own experience: "I've been finding encouragement at church lately." "Our church has a beautiful Easter service." Speak naturally and warmly. Your story matters.

Step Three: Extend a loving invitation.

Be specific and personal: "I would love for you to come sit with me this Easter." "I can pick you up if that helps." Sometimes the most powerful words are simply: "Come and see." (John 1:46)

Friends, Easter is about new life, living hope, and the love of Christ for all people. Someone in your life may be longing for that hope right now.

Let us pray.

Let us invite.

Let us welcome.

You never know how God might use your simple invitation.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Ted A.



Easter Tulips

In Honor or in Memory of Loved Ones



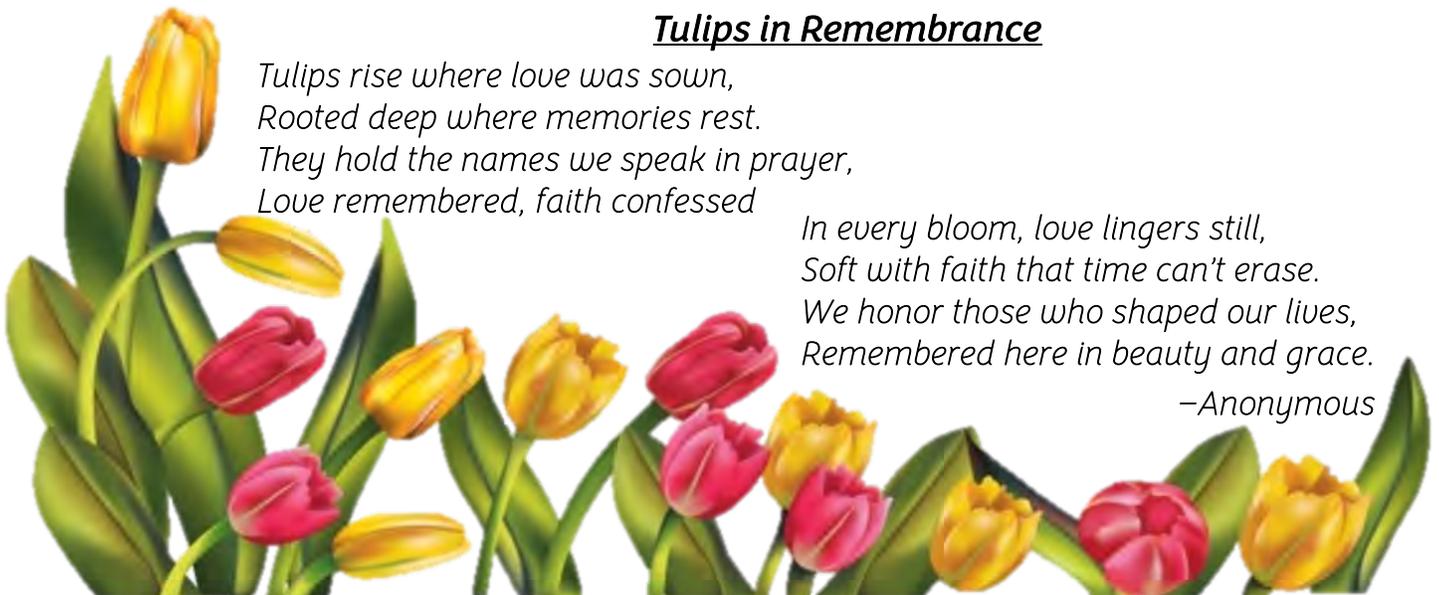
| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Melissa Earle | In Memory of Mom & Dad |
| Steve & Becky Emerson | In Memory of our Parents |
| Steve & Becky Emerson | In Memory of Passed Loved Ones |
| Linda Gren | In Honor of my Grandchildren |
| Rev. Ted A. Hartley | In Honor of my Granddaughter, Evie |
| Rev. Ted A. Hartley | In Honor of my Grandson, Harry |
| Steve & Susan Hoskins | In Honor of our Family |
| Steve & Susan Hoskins | Happy Easter! |
| Ashleigh Lane | In Memory of my dad Punkie Staley & In Honor of my mom Patti Staley |
| Jerry & Patsy Moore | In Memory of our Loved Ones that Passed |
| Orin & Kathy Naramore | In Honor of our Children |
| Chuck & Faye Pierman | In Memory of Faye's Family |
| Chuck & Faye Pierman | In Memory of Chuck's Family |
| Rose Rock | In Memory of Vi Smith |
| Rose Rock | In Honor of our Risen Saviour! |
| Patti Staley | In Loving Memory of Punkie |
| Patti Staley | In Memory of the Staley & Robbins Families |
| Byron & Jamie Webb | In Memory of Joy Vogel |
| Byron & Jamie Webb | In Honor of our Children |
| Jay & Sally Whitfield | In Memory of Chuck Robbins |
| Jay & Sally Whitfield | In Memory of our Parents Robert & Margaret Lauterbach and Joe & Norma Whitfield |

Tulips in Remembrance

*Tulips rise where love was sown,
Rooted deep where memories rest.
They hold the names we speak in prayer,
Love remembered, faith confessed*

*In every bloom, love lingers still,
Soft with faith that time can't erase.
We honor those who shaped our lives,
Remembered here in beauty and grace.*

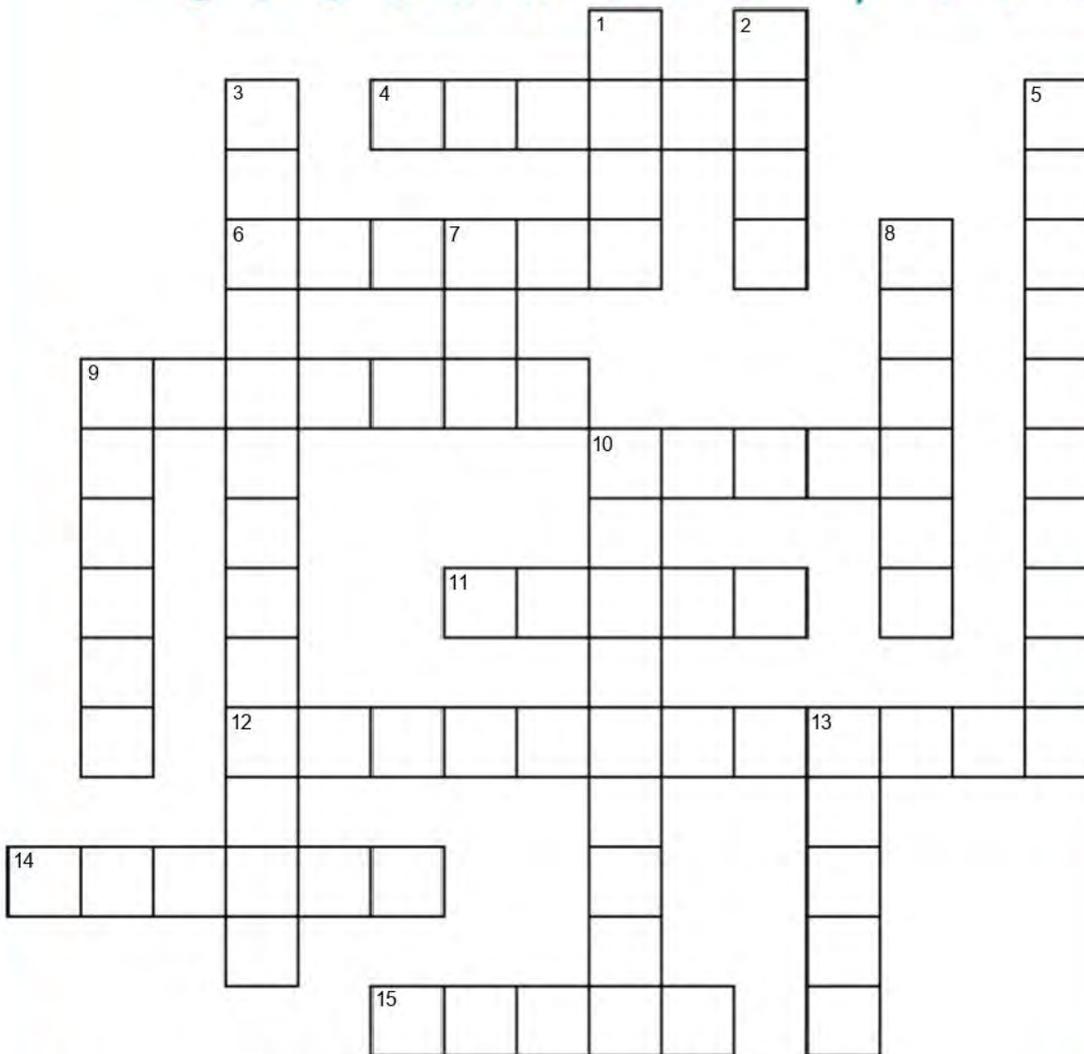
-Anonymous



EASTER

crossword puzzle

Page for kids of all ages



WORD BANK:

BASKET
 BONNET
 BUNNY
 CHICK
 CHOCOLATE
 CLUES
 CROSS
 DYE
 EASTER EGG HUNT
 EGGS
 HOT CROSS BUNS
 JELLYBEANS
 LILY
 PARADE
 PRETZEL
 SPRING
 SUNDAY

Down:

1. Popular Easter flower.
2. Oval shaped items you search for on Easter.
3. Event where you look for plastic eggs.
5. Colorful candies which are popular on Easter.
7. Used to color Easter eggs.
8. Woven container that holds candy & small gifts.
9. Festive procession in the streets on Easter.
10. Easter eggs are often made of this confection.
13. Jumping animal that represents Easter.

Across:

4. The season when Easter occurs.
6. Day of the week when Easter occurs.
9. Twisted bread topped with salt with religious symbolism.
10. Chirping animal that hatches from eggs.
11. Religious symbol seen during Easter.
12. Easter buns with crosses on top of them.
14. Hat worn on Easter Sunday.
15. Riddles that lead to an Easter basket.



In Our Prayers

In the Hospital in the Past Month

Sylvia Badgerow

Fighting Cancer

Halle Bloom, Julie Jenkins, Pam Riley,
Mark Gill, Mary Mallory, Lynne Barker,
Brian Engles, Rob Calder II, Katie Bishop,
Sandy Crawford, Joette Blakesley,
Gary Fargher, Merry Eccles, Nancy Brooks,
Norman Clark (asbestosis), Len Brockman,
Kellen Norman, Sandra Begemen,
Byron Webb

Prolonged Illness / Challenges

Margaret Johnston, Beth Ball,
Rev. Stan Haxton, Bonnie Lourash,
Margaret Sides, Roger Williams,
Les Leach, Jodi Cassady
Austin Aldag, Earl Webb,
Caitlin Reeves, Nancy Riddle

Long Term Care / Assisted Living

Anna Martin, Lynda Gustafson,
Betty Fugitt, Jean Aldag

Needing Prayer

Please pray for Our Dear Church Family who are struggling, the lonely, all who are unemployed, shut-in, those who are struggling with flu/colds, those who are grieving, all governmental leaders, those who are serving in our military, the youth and all caregivers.

Military Service Members

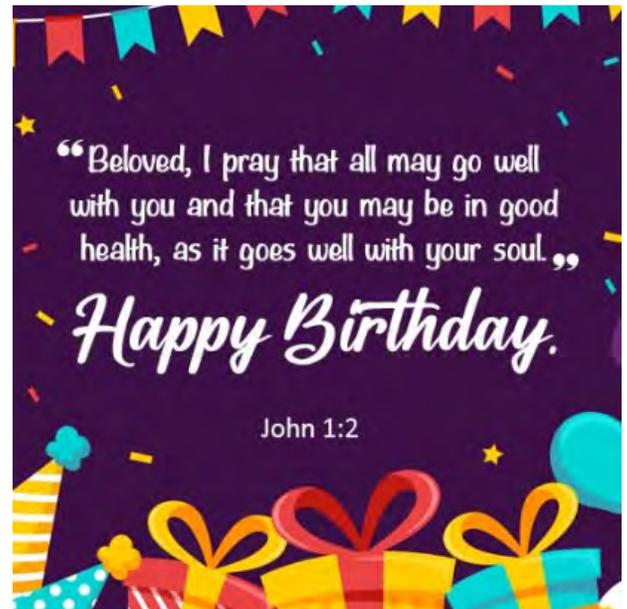
Joe Rizzo (Air National Guard),
Ryan Webb (Army),
Jared Koch (Air Force),
Nate Hill (Air National Guard)

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

You can never have too much prayer, but we want to keep our prayer petitions current. If you recognize any of the names above listed in red, please contact the office to let us know if they are still in need of prayer.

April Birthdays

| | |
|--------|------------------|
| Apr 2 | Mike Waldron |
| Apr 7 | Amber Fernandes |
| Apr 7 | Marie Meyer (94) |
| Apr 12 | Gabriel Munoz |
| Apr 16 | Mark Astle |
| Apr 17 | Denise Davis |
| Apr 17 | Joan La Conte |
| Apr 21 | Beth Vogel |
| Apr 22 | Bill Marks |
| Apr 22 | Paul Mooney |
| Apr 23 | Andrea Mooberry |
| Apr 28 | Forest Smith |
| Apr 29 | Morgan Naramore |



Is this your birth month?

If you have a birthday this month, and your name is missing from our list, we do not have your birthdate in our database.

Please provide the office with your birthdate; month, day and year.

We want to celebrate you!



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 29 9:00am Palm Sunday | 30 No SnackPac 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 5:45pm - 8:00pm Cub/Boy Scout Meeting | 31 No Choir Practice | 1 12:00pm REFRESH 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bell Choir Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm REBORN Practice | 2 3:00pm - 4:00pm LOF Easter Egg Hunt 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service | 3 7:00pm Good Friday Service | 4 4:00pm Breakfast Setup |
| 5 9:00am Easter Sunday Friends for Mission Breakfast 10:15am - 11:15am Easter Egg Hunt | 6 7:00am - 12:00pm LOF Spring/Grad Picture Day 9:00am - 12:00pm SnackPac Packing 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 5:45pm - 8:00pm Cub/Boy Scout Meeting | 7 No Choir Practice | 8 12:00pm REFRESH 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bell Choir Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm REBORN Practice | 9 10:30am - 2:00pm East Peoria Women's Club 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles | 10 | 11 8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast 4:00pm Breakfast Setup |
| 12 9:00am Worship Friends for Mission Breakfast Communion Sunday | 13 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 5:45pm - 8:00pm Cub/Boy Scout Meeting 6:15pm 4-H Meeting | 14 7:00pm - 8:00pm Choir Practice | 15 12:00pm REFRESH 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bell Choir Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm REBORN Practice | 16 9:00am - 12:00pm Early Head Start 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles | 17 | 18 11:30am Ladies Luncheon @ EP Avanti's |
| 19 9:00am Worship | 20 9:00am - 12:00pm SnackPac Packing 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 5:45pm - 8:00pm Cub/Boy Scout Meeting | 21 7:00pm - 8:00pm Choir Practice | 22 12:00pm REFRESH 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bell Choir Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm REBORN Practice 6:30pm - 8:30pm Puppets for Jesus Practice | 23 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles | 24 | 25 4:00pm Breakfast Setup |
| 26 9:00am Worship Friends for Mission Light Breakfast | 27 9:00am - 12:00pm SnackPac Packing 1:00pm - 3:00pm Food Pantry 5:45pm - 8:00pm Cub/Boy Scout Meeting | 28 7:00pm - 8:00pm Choir Practice | 29 12:00pm REFRESH 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bell Choir Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm REBORN Practice | 30 7:00pm EP/Morton Singles | 1 | 2 |

"If April showers should come your way, they bring the flowers that bloom in May."

— Buddy de Sylva



Pastor Ted A. as Defense Attorney "Grace"

The People VS. Judas Iscariot



Terry Newlan as Prosecuting Attorney "Justice"

Throughout the Lenten season, we've enjoyed our Sunday evening Supper Parties. Each week we've broken bread together before enjoying our Lenten worship drama series. The drama, entitled, "The People vs. Judas Iscariot," was written by William Clayton McCord. The captivating five-part series took place in a courtroom, as prosecution and defense attorneys attempted to sway the judge and jury (the audience) with evidence and witness testimony based upon the Bible and tradition to debate the guilt, actions,



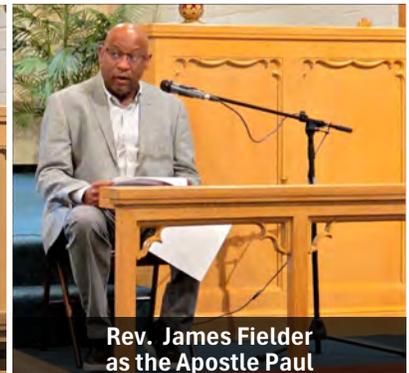
The "Honorable" Lynn Heisel as the Judge



Ed Newlan as "a friend of Judas"



Bob Dietrich as the Apostle Peter



Rev. James Fielder as the Apostle Paul



Steve Emerson as the Chief Priest & Jim Vogel as the Bailiff

and potential for redemption for the disgraced disciple. Biblical figures "subpoenaed" to testify as witnesses included Peter, John, Paul, Mary Magdalene, and a few others. These are a few photos from Acts 4 & 5 of the series. We are grateful to all who came out to prepare, serve, and partake in the meal, play a role in the drama, or serve as part of our jury pool (aka the audience). The jury's verdict: Not Guilty by just one vote! Grace wins!



Sam Knowlton as "Death" and Jim Vogel as the Bailiff

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

12:00 p.m. Wednesday REFRESH

First United Methodist Church
154 E. Washington St.
East Peoria, IL 61611-2529