



JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Dear Sisters and Brothers of faith,

Recently this series of thoughts for older folks came across my desk. In case you might be interested in receiving these “thoughts”, I’m forwarding it to you.

PRESENT ARTICLE
beingelderly@substack.com

“More Than Meets The Eye” [Tom Smith](#) Jun 23, 2026

If you’re elderly, you’ve been to funerals. A considerable number of them. Family members, friends, even some acquaintances have all died before you, and you go to their funerals to pay your respects to the mourners and to remember the person who died. And, in varying degrees, to grieve their loss, depending on who died. You know how to dress, whether you are going to the wake and/or the funeral service, what to say to the grievers on the receiving line, how long to stay, and what you will say to some of the other attendees. You know what to expect. It’s an event like other events we older people attend. You are a funeral going veteran. Sometimes, however, there’s more than meets the eye. A veil may fall away and reveal emotions we did not anticipate. The occasion itself includes sadness, grief, and loss. Beyond that, an extended period of declining physical and/or emotional health can lead to a genuine feeling of relief for the deceased and the grieving family along with the genuine loss.

The death of a relative or friend may usher in a memory of a family member who died years ago. That’s what happened to me during the recent funeral of my 92-year-



old friend, Rafe. My feeling of sincere loss for Rafe is real but his funeral, more so than other funerals in recent years, threw me back to my 26-year-old daughter Karla's life and suicide. While I sang the hymns and listened attentively to the eulogies about Rafe, I also heard the echoes of Karla's funeral service and flashes of her life and struggle with bipolar disorder.

I'm not sure why but his funeral service found a familiar hole in my heart, threw a soft light on that hole, and invited me to visit my grief for her once again. That hole was not as frightening, deep, and inescapable as it was 23 years and 5 months ago but it remains. Smaller, less threatening, familiar, now more a shallower pit. Yet I can gaze into it today and still see the darkness. But it's a manageable observation today rather than a gaping, bottomless hole. This current funeral experience brought back my reconciled memory of that previous tragedy. My friend, Ed, mentioned that he sometimes has a similar reflection related to the murder of his sister years ago. I suspect that other people, perhaps yourself at times, have parallel memories of deceased family or friends when you go to a funeral now, memories that do not entail suicide or murder but are personally meaningful to you. Funerals tend to refresh those memories.

We go to wakes and funerals to visit with family and friends we may not have seen for some time. We have a common interest in the deceased but it can also be a pleasant time to visit with others. Two months ago, Jim, my brother-in-law, and I went to the wake of my cousin, George, whom I haven't seen in years. And Jim is in a social group with Rita, George's sister. We paid our respects to the memory of George but spent most of the time visiting with Rita and other people we met at the wake. Those brief connections remain meaningful even though I don't know when we will connect again. Life consists of close relationships and more distant relationships and both of those categories are important for a full life. Funerals are one setting that can enhance all those relationships.

Funeral going can also point us to the future as well as the past. When and how will we die? As we get older, our mortality stares us in the face and funerals remind us of this inevitability. We could never dispute it but our age makes that day sooner rather than later. What we experience going to funerals can help us prepare for our own death. Circumstances will dictate how we die. The medical cause of our death will be listed on the death certificate. But we may have some control over our attitude in those final stages of life. The death beds I have experienced have led me to desire to love better, enjoy more, actually smell those roses in my garden, produce less but go deeper into the small realities that surround me, to relax, and to smile a lot. Funeral going can help me prepare for that approach if I get the chance.

Life is complicated, and so is death. Funerals are the intersection between life and death. Predictably, there is more than meets the eye at that intersection. -Tom Smith
Thanks for reading

“**Being Elderly!**” Subscribe for free to receive new posts and support my work. –
Tom Smith - <https://beingelderly.substack.com/>

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the awareness of what you already have.

USHERS:

July 5 Tom and Jan Miller
July 12 Sue Williams, Nancy Eisenhauer
July 19 Ginny Ganschinietz, Sue Ganschinietz
July 26 Judy Schmitt, Lew Thomasino

JULY BIRTHDAYS:

7/8 Darlene Schaperkoetter
7/10 Tiffani Eisenhauer
7/12 Luke Doctolero
7/19 Abby Captain Doctolero
7/23 Yvonne Weber
7/26 Clay Harris
7/28 Sherry Hackbarth



JULY ANNIVERSARIES:

7/15 Sharon & Steve Banjavcic # 48
7/17 Trisann & Bill Underwood # 27
7/30 Stacie & Tim Pickens # 10

Support Hoyleton Youth and Family Services Back to School Supply Drive

Donating back-to-school supplies to youth in care is a beautiful way to help kids begin the school year with confidence, dignity, and hope. It's more than just giving notebooks and backpacks; it's sending a message that their future matters and they are not alone. Your generosity can spark a fresh start filled with encouragement and possibility.

Drop off supplies or mail checks to: **8 Executive Dr Fairview Heights IL 62208** or call Meghan at 618-688-4727 or mseipp@hoyleton.org

OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND WORSHIP

Becky Ballard
1211 Moreland Apt 12
Belleville IL 62223



Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Rd
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Jackie Canterbury
105 W Julie St Apt C
Shiloh IL 62269

Ivy Schneider
213 Merriweather Ln
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Yvonne Weber
200 St Clair Dr
Fairview Heights IL 62208



PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Jane Bopp, Connor Brink, Jackie Canterbury, Claire, Eleanor, Leah Captain, Geralyn Gammon, Russ Hartmann, Marilyn Paul, Bennie Pointer, Aidan Randall, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, our beloved country.

CONDOLENCES to the friends and family of Ronald Bopp, husband of Sandy Bopp.

ST JOHN 75TH ANNIVERSARY

TIME TO CELEBRATE!!!
Please send email
addresses



The new St. John was established in January of 1951. January is a cold time to ask folks to gather and celebrate 75 years of service to the Fairview Heights and surrounding area. So... we will celebrate in the heat of summer! Plan on joining us for worship on Sunday, August 9, followed by a reception at church. We are trying to contact as many past members as we can.

If you know anyone who went to St. John in the past, please let them know and let us know, also. Also, if you or a family member were confirmed at St. John, we have lists of confirmands by year. If you can help us find email addresses for anyone, we would appreciate it.

We hope to see many old friends and make some new friends on **August 9!**

IT MAY BE VACATION SEASON FOR SOME, but bills do not take a vacation. Please remember your offerings this summer.



Council Notes

Just when you think things are in good order, something else pops up. After getting the gas line into the church replaced, we thought the building was in good shape. Not so much – the air conditioning needed attention. There was no cool air coming into the fellowship hall on a day when we had rented it to an outside group – on the hottest day this summer so far! After inspection, our heating/cooling contractor determined that there were problems with one of the units serving the sanctuary, also. By the time you get this newsletter, all should be repaired. Our building fund was able to cover the cost. If you would like to help the fund keep its good health, donations are gladly accepted! Many thanks to Ginny Ganschietz, our treasurer for her stewardship of our assets!

TIME TO CELEBRATE!!!

Plan on joining us for worship on Sunday, August 9, for the St. John 75th anniversary. Worship will be followed by a reception at church. We are trying to contact as many past members as we can. **If you know anyone who went to St. John in the past, please let them know and let us know, also. We need email addresses for as many folks as possible.** If you can help us find email addresses for anyone, we would appreciate it. We hope to see many old friends and make some new friends on August 9!

Nancy Eisenhower

JULY

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 AA Mtg 7 pm	3	4 HAPPY 4 TH 
5 Service of Word & Sacrament 10 am Fellowship time after worship	6	7	8	9 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:00 pm AA Meeting 7pm	10	11
12 Service of Word 10 am	13	14	15 Quilters Workshop 9-4	16 Quilters 10-2 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30	17	18
19 Service of Word 10 am	20	21	22	23 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7pm	24	25
26 Service of Word 10 am	27	28	29	30	31	