

Alton & St. Paul United Methodist Church
 P.O. Box 241
 Thayer, MO. 65791
Return Service Requested

U.S. Permit Paid
 Non-Profit Organization
 Permit #78
 Thayer, MO. 65791



Alton United Methodist Church

St. Paul United Methodist Church

Lent Begins Preparation for Easter

March 1 is the beginning of Lent, the period of preparation for Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent is 40 days in length, recalling the days Jesus spent in the wilderness in preparation for his public ministry, fasting and being tempted by Satan. Sundays are not counted as part of the season because each Sunday is considered a “mini-Easter,” when the somber spirit of Lent is replaced with anticipation of the Christ’s resurrection.

The secular world doesn’t care about Lent, but as Christians, this is a time for reflection, fasting, and preparation for Easter. The word “Lent” comes from the Anglo Saxon word ‘lencten’, which means “spring.” In the church where I grew up, there was a great emphasis on “giving something up” for Lent. We spent time on the playground comparing who had made the greatest sacrifice as judged by what we fasted from during the season. The appearance of piety was important to these young grade-schoolers. As I recall, candy or soda were the things we most often abstained from.

In the early church, Lent was a time for new converts to prepare for baptism. Today, it is a time of self-examination and reflection. My focus is less on sacrifice and more on personal discipline. I think giving something up is similar to making a New Year’s resolution. Within a few days, the resolution is broken and we go on with our lives as though nothing has changed. When my focus is on discipline and sacrifice, I know I will occasionally falter in my daily discipline, but I gently call myself back to focus. This year, I have resolved to spend more time journaling. Writing in response to scripture and prayers deepens my relationship with God, yet, I have found myself too busy to make time for this discipline. By publicly stating my intent to write more, I am also making myself more accountable. My purpose is to deepen my understanding of and relationship with God.

The Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday services on April 1. The Alton service is at 5:15 p.m. and the St. Paul service is at 7 p.m. This service allows participants to focus on our mortality, repent our sins and return to loving God. Ashes are placed on the forehead as a visible sign of repentance.

At both St. Paul and Alton there will be an opportunity for a short-term Bible study during Lent. We will be using the book, “With Jesus in the Upper Room,” by Maxie Dunnam. This is a study of the 13th through the 17th chapters of John, a section known as Jesus’ farewell address to the disciples. By taking a closer look at these chapters, participants will come to a deeper understanding of God’s love. Please join me at 6 p.m. Tuesdays, beginning March 7 at St. Paul and 6:15 p.m. Wednesdays at Alton. In addition, both churches are planning special daily services during Holy Week, April 10-14. St. Paul will meet in the morning at 7 a.m. Alton will meet at 6 p.m. Please make plans to be part of these special services.

Blessings,
 Pastor Pam



“You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming.” -Pablo Neruda

St. Paul Monthly Calendar

Leadership Mtg. 1st Sunday at 12 pm
UMM Breakfast 2nd Sunday at 7 am
Trustees Mtg. 2nd Sunday at 12 pm
Piecemakers every Thursday at 9 am

Exercise Group

Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11 am

Alton Monthly Calendar

UMM Breakfast 1st Sunday at 7 am
Leadership Mtg. 2nd Sunday at 7 pm
T’n’T Every Wednesday 3:30–5 pm

UMW Every 4th Monday 4pm



St. Paul United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 241, Thayer, MO 65791

Alton United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 383 Alton, MO 65606

Parsonage: (417) 778-6266 Pastor Pam Cell Phone: (573) 281-9367

Joint Charge Office (417) 264-3296

www.stpaulthayerumc.org

www.altonumc.org

E-mail: stpaulumc@centurytel.net

Small Church Initiative Moves Ahead

After many months of planning, preparation, the Small Church Initiative is about to launch at St. Paul United Methodist Church. A consultant team of Rev. Jon Spaulding and Rev. Suzanne Nicholson will be at St. Paul March 17 and 18. On Friday, March 17, they will interview church leaders in the afternoon and then meet with the entire congregation in the evening. There will be a chili supper at 6 p.m. that evening, followed by a Town Hall meeting at 7 p.m. On Saturday, the leadership team will meet with the consultants to learn areas of strength and areas of concern. The consultants will then present three prescriptions or action items they believe the congregation must focus on in the future.

Through the Small Church Initiative (SCI), consultants are invited to study the history and current conditions in the church and then make recommendations to revitalize that church. St. Paul is typical of many United Methodist churches struggling with declines in attendance and membership. The consultants will bring fresh ideas that may help the congregation grow into the future. After the consultants depart, the congregation will meet twice more over the next six weeks to discuss the prescriptions. Immediately after worship on April 30, there will be a church conference in which all members of the congregation can vote on whether to adopt or reject the prescriptions.

The SCI is designed to help the church change its focus from maintenance to mission. This is our opportunity to strengthen this congregation and ensure that it is a vital presence in Thayer into the future. All members are encouraged to participate in the Town Hall meeting on March 17 and the follow-up meetings April 2 and April 23. If you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Pam.

Our local unit of UMW has voted to "adopt" the Boys and Girls Club (Thayer Branch) for this calendar year. Boys and Girls Club provides activities at the Thayer Elementary School for school-age children after school and on week days when school is not in session. Once a quarter, there will be a list in the narthex of items that they can use. UMW members, as well as all others, are invited to sign up to bring an item by the date given, and we will get things delivered to the club. We don't have to get everything on the list this first time.

Please remember that groups of school kids can be rough and tumble, so sturdy items are best. For this quarter, the list is already in the narthex, and all donations should be at the church by Sunday, March 12.



Bread Breakers will meet on Tuesday, March 21st at 12pm.



Steve Biffle, Resource Officer at Thayer Public schools, featured speaker of the February Bread Breakers meeting.



Scout News



On Saturday

January 28th the Cub Scouts hosted their annual Pinewood Derby Races. Scouts from all five dens raced their cars, followed by the Venture Crew and then siblings! Jacob Ruddy won Grand Champion for the second year in a row, way to go Jacob!! District Pinewood Derby Races are on Saturday March 18th, Good Luck Cubs! Sunday February 5th was Scout Sunday at Alton UMC.

Several Scouts and their families attended both the UMM breakfast and church services. Seven Boy Scouts and four Boy Scout leaders were in attendance as well as four Cub Scouts, two Venture Scouts and three Cub Scout Leaders. We are so proud of our Scouts!! Both Alton Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts will be "Scouting for Food" in front of Harp's at Alton from March 1st -7th. All donations go to the Oregon County Food Pantry.

Alton UMC's Teens and Tweens on a Mission (T'n'T)

Thank you for your support with snacks and words of encouragement for TnT. At a recent meeting, we talked about finding more mission opportunities. A few weeks ago, we cleaned tables at the Community Worship Center (CWC) and picked up cigarette butts outside. Do you have any suggestions for us for mission projects? We would be available from about 3:45 to 4:45 on Wednesdays or at other times with advance preparations. Feel free to talk to one of the "Roberts Boys" or Marian Goodding at Worship or call her at 778-1817. An upcoming TnT fund-raiser is selling HolyLand Gifts, handcrafted, made in Bethlehem by Christians. A few brochures are available at both Alton and St. Paul's UM churches. TnT members will have some sample items and will take orders beginning later in March. If all goes as planned, we will deliver your purchases around Easter.



The Alton United Methodist Women prepared Baskets of Love to be delivered to selected homes in the area on Valentines Day. The baskets contained a homemade soup mix, fresh-baked loaf of bread, chocolate hearts, a devotional and a card.

