

# THE UNION

NEWS FOR THE OLD UNION CHURCH FAMILY | MARCH 2023

## New Member Highlights

### April and Justin Gray



The former Old Union motto “Where the heart finds a home” describes April Gray’s OUC homecoming quite well, after recently rejoining the church where she grew up and getting baptized, about 30 years after her first baptism at OUC. The daughter of member Larry Knoch, April recalls Old Union’s vibrant youth group, Awanas and puppet ministry. Although she’s seen the church through a lot of change, she feels

OUC has remained focused on Bible-based preaching.

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### Aly Basty and Thomas Pope



If couples who pray together stay together, then a lot of anniversaries are in store for the newly engaged Aly Basty and Thomas Pope. They met in children’s choir at age 3, were baptized on the same day at age 7 and grew up together at Kearney First Baptist Church. They reconnected through a Christian school function more than a year ago, and now they are a couple

who serves together, from game leaders at Old Union VBS to teaching Sunday school (grades 6-12), assisting the Bairds with Sunday night youth group and helping with AV during rehearsals and worship.

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## UPCOMING

**March 25:** Egg stuffing for the Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. in church basement

**March 26:** Communion

**April 1:** Easter Egg Hunt for ages 12 and under, 10 a.m., Lawson City Park

**April 2:** Palm Sunday

### April 9

- Sunrise Breakfast, 8-9:30 a.m.
- Easter Worship Service, 10 a.m. (no Sunday School)

**April 16:** Sermon series starts on “Philippians: Joy for the Journey”

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

### Junior Camp

June 12-15 (ages 8-12)

### VBS

July 16-20 (grades K-5)

### Tri State

July 17-21 (grades 6-12)

## CONCERT SERIES

### Tribute Quartet

Sept. 17, 4 p.m.

### Mark Trammell Quartet

Oct. 19, 7 p.m.

### The Lesters

Nov. 19, 10:30 a.m.

# From the Pastor



Over the next month, we will have a tremendous opportunity to be salt and light in our community. As we approach Easter, it is always a time that individuals are drawn to think about the Lord Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We want to use this time to bring people into our church and introduce them to the Savior. Begin now as we embark on our series about heaven. It will get individuals thinking about the next life and their relationship with Jesus Christ. As

we observe Palm Sunday, we want to celebrate the greatness of Jesus, and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It will be a special time for the children to be involved in the service. Even though Jesus entered Jerusalem as a King, the nation of Israel rejected His offer of the Kingdom, and He went to the cross for you and me. On Easter we will examine "Reflections of the Resurrection" as there were many different responses and emotions to the resurrection of Christ. Where will you find yourself? It will be a great season to invite others to come and celebrate the risen Savior with us. Who can you invite? Don't be timid and don't wait until the last minute. Once again, Old Union Church will be hosting the city wide Easter Egg Hunt at Lawson City Park. This will be on Saturday, April 1, at 10 a.m. We have a great opportunity to let our church name be known, and encourage individuals to attend our Easter services. There will be some surprises this year as we seek to put our best foot forward, and represent our church and our Savior. Please be in prayer now for the Easter Egg Hunt that we would have great weather, a good turn out, and some who would come to Old Union as a result of the Hunt. Also be in prayer for the part God would have you play in inviting, and praying for the Easter services. Pray for the gospel would be clear and individuals would come to saving faith in Christ at this great time of year!

Seek God first,

*Steve Baird*

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## Now Online!

You can now watch or share Pastor Steve's sermons online via Facebook or YouTube. They are posted every Monday. Subscribe to our YouTube channel and receive a notification when content is added.



[www.facebook.com/OldUnionChurch](http://www.facebook.com/OldUnionChurch)



[www.youtube.com/@oldunionchurch](http://www.youtube.com/@oldunionchurch)

## Celebrations

### March Birthdays

- 3 – Kenny Richardson
- 5 – Mary Berry
- 6 – Eugenia Jeffery
- 7 – Nick Stewart
- 8 – Mark Bales
- 9 – Adam Deardeuff
- 9 – Earl Wendel
- 11 – Wayne Long
- 13 – Gene Dolt
- 15 – Kira Phipps
- 17 – Bob Austin
- 21 – Elaine Speers
- 27 – Heather Birkinbine
- 28 – Stacy Nolker
- 28 – Brett Battagler

### March Anniversaries

- 7 – Matt & Amber Jackson
- 15 – Jesse & Sarah McCleary

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## Recommended Reading

If you want a deeper understanding of grace, Andy Stanley's book *The Grace of God* is one you will want to pick up. The book does not necessarily define grace but demonstrates and describes it throughout the Word of God. Stanley uses creation, the Ten Commandments, and various Bible characters (i.e., Abraham, Jonah, Matthew, and the Samaritan Woman) to dive into the topic of grace. It is easy to read and worth the time to spend with the book. I have an extra copy if anyone would like to read it. – *Steve Baird*

*We encourage everyone to use our church library in the back of the sanctuary. We have hundreds of titles you can check out during office hours or on Sundays.*

## Basty and Pope *(continued)*

Aly and Thomas grew up in Kearney. Thomas graduated from Northland Christian in and attended seminary for more than a year. He's currently a truck driver for Zipco Contracting and works part time at Home Depot with hopes of becoming a carpenter. Aly, a gymnast, graduated last year from Kearney where she was an All-American Cheerleader. She attends Maple Woods Community College and works in admitting at North Kansas City Hospital, on her path to becoming a nurse. "I've always wanted to help people, even at young age, and nursing is one of

the best ways to help people," Aly said. "The opportunities to spread the word are endless in a hospital, so I look forward to helping patients physically and spiritually."

Together they like watching movies, shopping and working with kids at church. Aly is an avid reader and enjoys aunt life while Thomas likes to golf and hunt. He also says he has gospel music in his blood, growing up going to concerts with his dad, Jeremy, and getting to perform with some big-name groups. An added bonus of Old Union is getting to see so

many of Thomas' family members at church every Sunday.

Thomas sums up OUC's strength with one word: community. "Sitting in the [sound] booth when 'Family of God' is playing, I see every single member stand up and greet friends. It's rare in a church for everyone to have such vibrant friendships. The Bible says we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ, and our members are the hands and feet of Christ. We are a strong community, and a strong community makes a strong church."

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## Grays *(continued)*

That's something she and her husband, Justin, value. "Pastor Steve does a really good job of deep diving into the Bible," Justin said. "So many churches water down the scripture and are afraid of offending people instead of preaching the Word. Today we need really strong pastors and strong leaders, and as Christians we have to stand up to what's wrong."

OUC has certainly evolved, and April and Justin would say their hearts have, too. They both had a strong foundation, growing up in church and being homeschooled, but eventually found themselves going through the motions with their faith. They both have rededicated themselves to the Lord and are committed to putting God first in everything they do.

The couple was acquainted many years ago and reconnected with God's help. They were married nine years ago and later moved to Lawson into the home where April was raised. Justin is from Pleasant Hill and he, too, has been involved in different churches. One standout experience was accompanying 23 youth to Alaska through Youth With a Mission to work in a Native American village and start building a school.

The couple has a blended family of four children and eight grandchildren. April is a certified aromatherapist and used to play the piano and serve on the Fire Department. As they are able, the Grays like to hike and Justin loves to fish. They also look forward to float trips during the annual Missouri Council of the

Blind camp in Steelville. April had debilitating health issues and was disabled before her eyesight declined, but retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic eye disease that causes vision loss over time, has left April legally blind like her mother. Justin suffered a broken back that healed incorrectly, then reinjured it in a tree trimming accident. His disability brings its own challenges, yet he remains grateful for the time he can spend at home with April and says prayer is the most positive thing they can do for one another. April added, "When you suffer pain and problems together, it can cause a rift in a marriage if you don't have Jesus. But when you pray together, you show you really care for the person. Prayer helps us get through our struggles."

# Old Union Outreach

## ▶ Men's Bible Study

The Old Union Men's Bible study meets Wednesday from 7-8 p.m. at the HUD Office Community Room, 517 N. Doniphan Street in Lawson. Recent studies include prayer, stewardship, life of Jesus, Christian unity and an examination of various books of the Bible. The format is informal, as a subject is tossed on the table and discussed. The goal at the end of each evening is to have a better understanding of Biblical principles and a closer relationship with fellow brothers in Christ. – *Reggie St. John, Bible study leader*

## ▶ GriefShare

GriefShare is a support group that meets weekly, where you will find an oasis on your journey through grief. Often friends and family want to help you but don't know how. Find help and encouragement after the death of a family member or friend with others who understand how you feel because they've been in the same place.

The group meets every Thursday. Choose from these sessions:

- 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Excelsior Springs Hospital Home Health & Hospice (drive to the back of the building and enter through the basement door)
- 7-9 p.m., Lawson Life Center, 307 E. 3rd Street

For more information, contact Debbie Hummel at 816-615-1307.

## ▶ Easter Egg Hunt

Old Union Church will host this popular event again this year. Bring the special kids in your life, or come to show support for our church as Pastor Steve will say a few words, offer a prayer and hand out information about Old Union. What a great opportunity to show our community the great people and great ministries they'll find at OUC!

### Saturday, April 1

10 a.m. at Lawson City Park

Free for all children ages 12 and under

Kids need to bring a basket or bag for their goodies.

Also offering:

- Balloon artist
- Tattoos
- Candy
- The Easter Bunny (great photo opportunity!)

## Connect

Old Union Church  
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Lawson, MO 64062  
(816) 296-3922

Pastor Steve Baird  
(913) 912-0686  
[oldunionpastor00@gmail.com](mailto:oldunionpastor00@gmail.com)

Secretary Lisa Baird:  
[lisabairdouc@gmail.com](mailto:lisabairdouc@gmail.com)

Church Office Hours:  
Tuesday-Friday, 8 a.m.-noon

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Youth Group (grades 4-12)  
Sundays, 5-6:30 p.m.,  
Bairds' Home

Men's Bible Study:  
Wednesdays, 7 p.m., HUD  
Office Community Room

Women's Bible Study:  
10:30 a.m., Wednesdays,  
Catrick's Café



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(Old Union Prayer Warriors)

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