

# The Friendly Call

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • MANCHESTER, MO



## Worship Schedule April 2026

### April 5 - EASTER

7:00 am Pastor Kevin

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

Music: Sanctuary Choir

### April 12

9:30 am Rev. Cliff Aerie

Music: Oikos Ensemble

### April 19

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

Music: Sanctuary Choir

### April 26

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

Music: Bell Choir



# 2026



## ALL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

**Saturday, May 2nd, 2:30 pm**

### Fellowship Hall

We had so much fun in January, we decided to do it again in May! We are hosting an “**All Church Fellowship Supper**” on **Saturday, May 2nd** beginning at 2:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Once again, the meal will be simple fare (tacos (beef & chicken), toppings, beans & rice, dessert, and beverages). We’re going to celebrate Cinco de Mayo a little early. In order to plan appropriately, a sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board across from the church offices beginning April 5th.

**Please plan to attend...you’ll be glad you did!**  
**Mark your calendar NOW!** The only thing you need to bring is your appetite and charming personality! Questions? Please see Ann Picaud or Cindy Boddy.



Holy Week is here! We ponder once again the significance of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many will interpret this event as “Jesus died on the cross for my sins and the sins of the world.” I’ve heard this a few times already this Lenten season. This view of Jesus dying for our sins has been nurtured in all of us and is particularly strong right around Easter. I’m always a little uneasy with this theology.



The practical concern is that this view of Jesus potentially lets us off the hook from any responsibility or involvement in the world. It’s like the Gnostics who had this dualistic perspective on life between the evil material world and the good spiritual realm. We are simply divine souls trapped in this earthly existence. Faith in Jesus as the Christ liberates us to receive the spiritual world. That gives the impression that Jesus has taken care of everything, so I don’t have to do anything on this planet. It’s a selfish perspective that leads to unhealthy individualism. Furthermore, this notion tends to feed the belief that faith is all about the afterlife.

That brings me to the theological concern. The term typically associated with Jesus dying for our sins is ‘substitutionary atonement.’ That means Jesus died on the cross in our place as a “substitute payment” for human sin. God needed someone to pay the price, so Jesus was the sacrifice. That doesn’t paint God in a good light. This harsh, vindictive Creator required someone to suffer the consequences.

I learned years ago that the word “substitution” doesn’t appear in the Bible. The theology of ‘substitutionary atonement’ was developed by Anselm in 1097 to explain the cross. But the meaning of sacrifice and atonement were very different in the ancient world. The word sacrifice meant “to make something holy” by offering it to the Lord. So, sacrifice involves giving a gift to God, which usually included a meal that celebrated God’s presence. This is what happened with the Passover lamb in Judaism. Faithful Jews offered up a lamb to God in order that it would be seen as holy before sharing in a meal together. The lamb was not a substitute for chicken.

The word atonement means reconciliation. Often people refer to atonement as “at-one-ment.” In essence, through Christ we are at one with God. We believe Jesus was willing to make a gift of his life to God; and he died because of his love for others. The first part is sacrifice, while the second part is atonement. Jesus’ death was a holy sacrifice, not a substitution. He didn’t die in the place of someone else. The earliest followers of Jesus would not have thought his death was paying the price for their sins. To think that Jesus died on the cross to let followers off the hook from responsibility or involvement, and to focus solely on the afterlife, would have been offensive.

Did Jesus die for our sins? Scholars have debated that for centuries. Did he die because of humanity’s sinfulness? Yes! For this reason, we should always ask God for forgiveness and know that God’s grace is sufficient. Jesus willingly gave his life as a holy gift to God so that we might live a new and different way of life, a life that reveals the peace and love of our Lord. Thus, in this season of Easter, we are invited to be at one with God through Christ. May this resurrection spirit and new life fill us with strength and courage for our Christian service.

Easter blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin".



**Notes from the March 10, 2026 Council Meeting:**

**April Calendar of Events:**

Easter Weekend:

April 2, Maundy Thursday – Worship & Communion, 7 PM

April 3, Good Friday – Tenebrae Service, 7 PM

April 5, Easter Sunday, Sunrise Service & Communion, (Pavilion) 7 AM

Worship Service & Communion, 9:30 AM

There are printed pamphlets available for members who are interested in what funds the church has which are available for memorial donations and withdrawals for specified projects.

**Building & Grounds Projects** are in various stages of progress. Topps Paving & Sealing will be paving and sealing the parking lots and roads. Resurfacing of the south lot will take place this summer. It was last done over 20 years ago.

Our new **Christian Education Coordinator**, Julia Mock, has begun employment..

**Insurance** Our agent is getting bids.

Bill Gamewell has agreed to head our **Capital Campaign** Committee. This campaign will be shorter than the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign.

We are looking into the use of **technology and laity services** when the pastor or the musicians are unavailable for worship services.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Ramin*

Recording Secretary

**Financial Report - February 28, 2026**

<u>Actual Receipts</u>	<u>Budget Receipts</u>	<u>YTD Actual Receipts</u>	<u>YTD Budget Receipts</u>
\$51,303.31	\$32,156.00	\$100,642.54	\$75,312.00
<u>Actual Expenditures</u>	<u>Budget Expenditures</u>	<u>YTD Actual Expenditures</u>	<u>YTD Budget Expenditures</u>
\$31,159.01	\$30,693.75	\$58,139.61	\$59,137.50

Members of the Church Council of St. John United Church of Christ, Manchester, meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Hospitality Room of the church (or via Zoom). The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 14, 2026.**







## Christian Education

# Youth Christian Education & Sunday School



**CHILDCARE FOR NURSERY and TODDLERS** is available at the 9:30 am service. Also, for your convenience, a Family Assistance Room is located at the rear of the sanctuary.

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** We will hear stories and lessons taught in the Old and New Testaments combined with worksheets, games, and crafts to focus on getting the children acquainted with the Bible and understanding how our families and church are part of a greater community in God's world. Students should come to the sanctuary for the 9:30 am service with their families and will be dismissed to their classes.

**MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS** The Youth Group will meet at 9:30 am in the classroom – except on the first Sunday of each month when we will attend church service with our family and friends. A mix of formal lessons and open discussion increases understanding of our faith and how it relates to our church and the world around us. We strive to get youth involved in church groups and activities, as well as community service events. Friends are always welcome!!

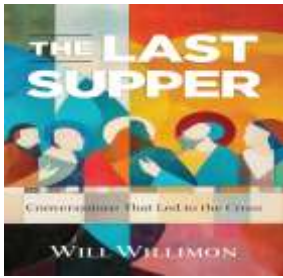


### **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**BCE members will now be meeting** on the **third Tuesday** of the month at 6:00 pm via ZOOM. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st. We are always looking for new study ideas and help with upcoming projects with the adults and children. Contact Pam Boucher if you have any questions or would like to sign up to volunteer.

Please extend a warm St. John welcome to our new **Christian Education Coordinator, Julie Mock**. Julie is part-time and her schedule will vary. She currently plans to be in the office on Tuesdays and Fridays and in worship on Sunday mornings. We are *delighted* to have Julie join the staff and hope each of you will welcome her when you phone or stop by. Her email address is: [julie@stjohnmanchester.org](mailto:julie@stjohnmanchester.org)





**ADULT EDUCATION - The Last Supper**

The Tuesday evening adult education class continues. We are following the book **The Last Supper** by Will Willimon. This Lenten study explores the parables and stories Jesus told at tables along the way to his final meal. Participants are discussing the biblical stories about searching shepherds, welcoming hosts, prodigal sons, and rejected invitations illuminating the deeper significance of the Last Supper and Christ's sacrifice. These sessions are on the first and third

Tuesday nights of the month. Our schedule is below. Should you have questions, please speak with Pastor Kevin.

<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Class Theme</i>	<i>Scripture Reference</i>
April 7	“Refusing the Host”	Luke 19:11-27 and 20:9-19
April 21	“The Host Who Becomes the Meal”	Luke 22:9-21 and 24:3-25

**TO JOIN VIA ZOOM**

Time: April 7, 2026 7:00 pm Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2267934041?omn=89414466626>

Meeting ID: 226 793 4041

**One tap mobile:** +13052241968,,2267934041# US +13092053325,,2267934041# US

Instructions: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/2267934041?signature=LTnB5xQR2ITidUoeDbJAKh8loz20fAuXm8GOFPLDOKk>

**WALK AT SHAW NATURE RESERVE**

The **WISE/Green Team** nature walk will be on Saturday, April 11th at 10:00 am. This mental health walk will be held at the **Shaw Nature Reserve**, 307 Pinetum Loop Road, Gray Summit. We will offer a ride share for anyone that needs it. Admission is free for up to 10 people if you are not a member. Finally, please bring a sack lunch and we will share a picnic on the grounds. For anyone driving directly to the reserve, we will meet in the main parking lot by the visitor center. If you are interested, please sign up on the sheet across from the church office. Should you have questions, feel free to talk with Carol Ruh or Pastor Kevin.



**LAY LITURGIST** - The **Worship & Music Team** is once again asking for lay liturgists for Sunday morning giving people the opportunity to be part of worship leadership. Those who participate will share the Call to Worship, Unison Prayer, and Scripture reading. We would like to encourage people to sign-up for a month. That means people would be in worship leadership for all the

Sundays. The hope is that people might feel more comfortable as we move throughout the month. Should you have to miss a Sunday because of a conflict, then please don't let that deter you from signing up. We can certainly work around that with people. A new sign-up sheet for the months of April and May is on the bulletin board across from the church office. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Pastor Kevin.



<b>Worship Attendance</b>			
<i>Date</i>	<i>In Person</i>	<i>Streaming</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<b>March 1</b>	120	60	180
<b>March 8</b>	80	69	149
<b>March 15</b>	95	62	157
<b>March 22</b>	80	48	128

**NOTE:** Streaming count is household so it could include more than one person; count is taken during LIVE streaming.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>YEARS</b>
Dick & Ilene Scharnhorst	4/1	14
Rich & Barb Lovan	4/6	69
Todd & Nancy Vancardo	4/10	27
Ed & Beverly Thiele	4/20	52
Clinton & Judy Cummings	4/21	64
Maurice & Nancy Van Buskirk	4/26	57
Bill & Nancy Gamewell	4/29	31



*Congratulations to:*

Kevin & Alicia McGrane  
on the birth of their daughter

*Finlea Brianne McGrane*

born on March 23, 2026  
weighing 7 lbs., 5 oz.; 20 inches

Proud big brothers:  
Delton & Lochlan

Proud maternal grandparents are:  
Marcella & Lance Armstrong

**Church Office Closed**

The Church Office will be closed on **Monday, April 6** (Easter Monday). The office will reopen on Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 am.

Articles and information for the **May** issue of The 'Friendly Call' are due on **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**. Please place a hard copy of the article in the church office mail slot or email to: [jane@stjohnmanchester.org](mailto:jane@stjohnmanchester.org).



## CONFIRMATION

As Tertullian once said, “Christians are made, not born.” Thus, the church has been given the task of confirming (to make firmer and stronger) the faith of our young people. St. John is inquiring about a Confirmation Program for 2026-2027. If you know of a young person who will be in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9<sup>th</sup> grade next fall, and is interested in Confirmation, then please let us know. We are trying to make arrangements now. At this point, we are looking at classes on Sunday morning, along with some field trips. Those who make a commitment to the program are invited to affirm their baptismal vows and are received into full church membership through the Rite of Confirmation. The Confirmation worship service would take place on Sunday, May 16, 2027. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Pastor Kevin by phone (636-391-6655) or email ([kevin@stjohnmanchester.org](mailto:kevin@stjohnmanchester.org)). Hope to hear from you!



## Graduate Recognition



Annually, we highlight our graduates in the May edition of the Friendly Call each year. To that end we are asking parents (and grandparents) to send us information about our St. John young adults who will be graduating from high school, college, graduate school, etc. this May or June including a recent photo. Send information to Julie Mock, Christian Education Coordinator ([Julie@stjohnmanchester.org](mailto:Julie@stjohnmanchester.org)) by **Tuesday, April 15**. We will also be honoring our graduates during worship service on **Sunday, May 17, 2026**. If you have any questions, please contact Julie .

Dear St. John Family,

Thank you for the wonderful recognition reception you gave me on March 1st. I am humbled and overwhelmed by your kind words, both spoken and written. The hugs I received were a bonus and are greatly appreciated. I fell in love with St. John on day one and that love grows with each passing day I am able to serve this church and each of you. The quote, “Love what you do and you’ll never work a day in your life” is definitely true! Many thanks to the women who put together the reception: Mary Ellen Berg, Janice Jung, Judy Lindquist, and Lynn Sabina, and everyone who provided cookies. The cookies & punch were delightful. Thanks to Laurie Albright & Judy Lindquist for the “**Memory Book**” and to everyone who wrote a card or message in the book; it is a remembrance I will cherish. Thank you to the Church Council for the supply of candy and gift card! They will both be put to good use (Keith Gaertner, Judy Lindquist, and Pastor Kevin are especially appreciative of the candy!). Thank you, Pastor Kevin for your extremely thoughtful words during worship; I hope I continue to make a difference here for a long time!



Most importantly, thank you, congregation for making St. John the amazing church it is. Each and every one of you have truly become part of my family and I love you with all my heart! I thank God everyday for the opportunity to worship and work here.

With much love & appreciation,  
Cindy Boddy



### OUTREACH TEAM MEETING

The **Outreach Team** will **NOT** meet in **April**; the next meeting will be **Thursday, May 7, 2026** at 6:30 pm in the Hospitality Room. Please join us!

## Lydia's House - April Outreach



**Lydia's House** offers secure housing and immediate community for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Currently they have 50 confidentially located, fully furnished apartments where families can find refuge, safety, and support. Their transitional housing is one of the largest in the country and the **only** program of its kind in eastern Missouri. Domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness. Each family at Lydia's House is provided an advocate to help

guide them through the process of recovering from abuse. All family members are connected to support services, including individual and group resources, to help them build the skills that are necessary not only for surviving but thriving in the wake of trauma. To read more about this long-time St. John mission partner, go to [lydiashouse.org](http://lydiashouse.org).

**How can you get involved? By donating!** Kitchen towels and dishcloths, bath towel sets, (face, hand, body)-**new only**, natural colors, twin size sheet sets (new only), pot holders, Awesome Cleaner (Dollar Tree), women's deodorant, moisturizing soaps (like Dove or Equate beauty bar soap). Also needed are gift cards to: Schnuck's, Aldi, Target, Walmart, Home Depot, or Lowe's. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, please use the Helping Hands envelope in your pew or simply write "Lydia's House" in the memo field of your check.

Thank you for your support!

### LUCINDA'S PINS - Lydia's House

**Beginning on Sunday, April 12th**, we will sell pins from **Lydia's House** (Lucinda's Pins). It has been several years since we sold these pins and many of you have expressed an interest in purchasing them once again. The cost has remained the same; they are \$20.00 each. All the money goes to Lydia's House. The Outreach Team will sell them through the end of April. Contact Marty Boucher or Cindy Boddy if you have questions.



**The Outreach Team** would like to thank everyone who attended, participated, and helped in this year's Trivia Night and Silent Auction to benefit Habitat for Humanity. We had 84 people attend this year and over \$2,100.00 was raised for Habitat for Humanity. Thank you very much.



Circle of Concern  
FOOD PANTRY

**CURRENT NEEDS:** The most needed items for **Circle of Concern** currently are:

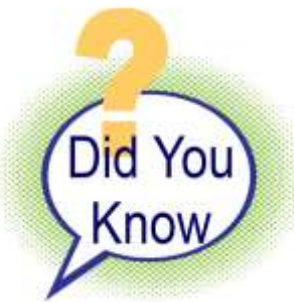
You can also order items for **Circle** online at:

- ◆ Amazon Wish List
- ◆ Walmart
- ◆ Target

and they will be delivered directly to **Circle of Concern**

**OR**

by buying Dierberg gift cards (denominations of \$50 or \$100) through our own Shop N Support program. See Harry Gaehle on a Sunday morning.



- ♥ Dinner Helpers
- ♥ Condiments
- ♥ Cereal/Oatmeal
- ♥ Snacks (8-12 servings)
- ♥ Bar soap
- ♥ Mouthwash
- ♥ Women's incontinence briefs (L & XL)
- ♥ Razors



**Thanks for your help keeping our red shopping carts full!**

**LUNCH AT SUNSHINE MINISTRIES**

St. John Outreach continues to provide and share a meal each month with the men at the residence center for **Sunshine Ministries**. We will carpool from church at 11:15 am (lunch at noon) and return by 1:15 pm. We need one or two people to help each month. If you are interested in joining us on **April 9, 2026** (note, alternate date for this month only), please see Judy Lindquist. To learn more about the men's outreach of Sunshine Ministries go to: <https://www.sunshineministries.org/men-s-outreach> .



**FONTANA FRIENDS**

The Outreach Team continues monthly visits to our **Fontana Friends** in their home. Visits are on the **second Thursday of the month from about 2:00 to 3:00 pm**. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the offices. We meet at church at 1:40 pm and carpool to Fontana. Our next visit will be on **Thursday, April 9, 2026**. If you need additional information, please contact Mary Ellen Berg.

I want to thank the congregation and Dr. Gregory for the calls and the wonderful cards. I also want to thank the members for the delicious food. The food was great and seeing everyone even better. I have spent a lot of lonely hours at home and am so anxious to being able to return to church and be back among so many great people!

Thank You,  
*Marty Boucher*



**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

Thank you to all who helped fold bags for the annual letter carriers food drive. The **Circle of Concern** and the **National Stamp Out Hunger** event are immensely grateful for this

help! We folded 1200 bags in 35 minutes! Many hands make tasks fun and quick! Thanks again!



**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**  
**Tuesday, April 21**  
**11:30 am**

Let's Card Pop! We will learn to make a DIY 3D pop-up floral card for any occasion. Come join us for some crafting fun. Bring a sandwich... dessert and drinks provided! Any questions see Marty Boucher

On **Sunday, April 12, 2026** the **OIKOS Ensemble** will be presenting the worship service. This will be a celebratory service with uplifting **jazz** music. We appreciate **OIKOS** sharing their time and talents with us this day as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please plan to join us for this special service.

**All are welcome!**



**OIKOS ENSEMBLE**  
**Sunday, April 12th**



**TEA WITH FRIENDS**

Enjoy coffee, tea, or your favorite beverage, as you take some time to visit with friends on Wednesdays, at the Panera at 14646 Manchester Road, Ballwin, between 3 and 5 pm to share conversations that lead to community. Kathy Hoadley or Joan James will be the host. **All generations are invited to stop in!**



### J.O.Y. (Just Older Youth)

Show & Tell Life Treasures

Saturday, April 11, 2026

Noon until 3:00 pm

Please bring one meaningful item that brings back fond memories to share. Here's some suggestions:

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>wedding photo</i>         | <i>sports memorabilia</i>      |
| <i>military item / photo</i> | <i>favorite cookbook</i>       |
| <i>childhood item</i>        | <i>souvenir</i>                |
| <i>travel memory</i>         | <i>anything special to YOU</i> |

Please also bring your favorite sandwich, salad or dessert. Drinks will be provided. There's a signup sheet on the bulletin board across from Pastor Kevin's office. We hope to see you there! Questions? See Betty Anton.

The **Manchester Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge** is aiming to collect 2,000 pounds of recyclable plastic by the end of 2026 to earn two new benches made from recycled materials. The **Green Team** encourages everyone to help them meet this goal. Bring the following **CLEAN** plastics to church and deposit them in the openings on the Outreach counter in the gathering area:

Grocery Bags, Bread Bags, Bubble Wrap, Dry Cleaning Bags, Newspaper Sleeves, Ice Bags, Plastic Reshipping Envelopes, Ziploc and Reclosable Storage Bags, Cereal Bags, Case Overwrap and Produce Bags. Pick up an information sheet at church to keep for a friendly reminder!



### GREEN TEAM NEWS

- ♥ The **Green Team** will be celebrating Earth Day on April 18th at 10:00 am as we plant more trees on our church property.
- ♥ Thank you to everyone that has been participating in the Manchester Plastic Recycling Program.
- ♥ It will soon be time to prepare our garden beds for planting. Circle of Concern appreciates the fresh vegetables our garden produces.
- ♥ Now is the time to take part in Missouri's Callery (Bradford) Pear "Buyback" Program. Homeowners who cut down one or more Callery pear trees can receive a free, non-invasive tree. Check out the following website for the information on how to participate in this program: <https://moinvasives.org/pear-buyback/>



Our next **Green Team** meeting is on **Thursday, April 9**, at 7:00 pm.

Gifts & Memorials

In memory of **Dr. Richard Bloesch**  
(husband of Ethel (Wobus) Bloesch)  
**Music Fund**  
Donna Osiek

In memory of **Mary Jane Belsher**  
**Memorial Fund**  
Jake & Brenda Henderson  
Gary, Jake, Kev, and Jill Henderson

In memory of **Donald Lee Dahlem**  
**Memorial Fund**  
Deb Burleson  
Mark Engelhardt  
Randy Engelhardt  
Tommy Theiss  
**Technology Fund**  
Keith Gaertner

Gifts in honor of **Cindy Boddy**  
**General Fund**  
Karen Pennington  
**Music Fund**  
Donna Osiek

**St. John Weekend at SHANNONDALE - June 26-28**

**Mark your calendar** for a wonderful weekend at **Shannondale**. We'll eat, work, eat, play, eat, relax, eat, have fellowship, and then eat some more! Home-made ice cream and foil packs are a tradition! Additional information will be available as we get closer to the event. There's a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the church offices. The lodge is air-conditioned! If you have any questions, see Dave Gaehle. **Please plan to join us; you won't be disappointed you did!**



1810 Craig Road, Suite 124  
St. Louis, MO 63146  
info@namistl.org  
HelpLine: 314-962-4670

St. John UCC Manchester holds a **NAMI Support group** meeting the third Thursday of each month. Our next meeting is scheduled for **April 16, 2026**. The group meets in the Hospitality Room at 6:30 pm. Please note that you must go to the **NAMI** website to sign up to attend the meeting prior to arrival. Everyone is welcome to join us! NAMI contact at St. John is Angela Kern, [akern@sbcglobal.net](mailto:akern@sbcglobal.net).

**Website: <https://www.namistl.org>**

## PRAYER REQUESTS

You will find **PRAYER REQUEST** cards in the pews. A box is located on the table in the Gathering Area for completed cards to be deposited. There are times when we all need an extra prayer said for us and where better than from our friends at St John!



### KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Landon Weber - Houston, Texas  
Nancee Miller - Clarendale Clayton  
Carol Matthews - Brooking Park  
Elaine Van Gels - Lake St. Charles Senior Center  
Harry Taub - Dolan Memory Care (Lyon Manor)  
Annette Owings - Garden View  
Michele Dahlem - Van Well Home  
People in the Middle East  
People in Ukraine

### AT HOME

Ron Carr	Betty Fox
Frank & Lois Leahy	Laura Waller
Jennifer Weber	Bruce Carvell
Gloria (Fontana Friend)	



**Commander Andrew Brennecke**, Coast Guard, Norfolk, VA, son of Bob & Joy Brennecke  
**Sgt. Codey Burnham**, U.S. Marine Corps, Indian Head, MD, grandson of Betty & Howard Anton  
**Sgt. First Class Douglas Krohn**, United States Army Recruiting Command, Quincy, IL  
**Technical Sgt. Michael Kargauer**, Eielson AFB, Alaska, son of Dawn (Martin) Dorris  
**E Sgt. Bryan Milberg**, Fort Campbell, KY, grandson of Derald & Donna Forbis  
**Sgt. Matt Starck**, Marines, Camp Lejeune, NC, son of Walter & Marcia Starck