



 **CHARIS**
The St Louis Women's Chorus
presents

We are Family

featuring
Kristen Goodman

Friday, May 17 7pm & Saturday, May 18 4pm

Community Music School of Webster University
535 Garden Ave, St. Louis, MO 63119



Kristen Goodman *(she/they)*

Singer / Songwriter / Storyteller based in NYC

Virtual & In-Person Lessons in voice, piano, acoustic guitar,
songwriting, audition prep, and stage presence- kids/adults

Virtual & Live Concerts for corporate events,
fundraisers, LGBTQ+ affiliate groups, and more

We Are Family!

I'm so honored to share the stage with CHARIS this weekend in St. Louis, my home of twenty years. It's truly a dream come true to write, arrange, and perform my own music with this beautiful choir! *(Literally, as I was writing one of these songs a couple years ago, I had a vision of CHARIS singing the harmonies with me!)* This project has been an emotional journey. I was inspired to write a new song for the 'family' theme. So, I took a deep dive into my own trauma-informed definitions of family, home, and belonging. Preparing for this concert has helped me to heal some old wounds, and for that I am very grateful. May the music we share today bring you a deep sense of connection.

Thank you to my parents, family, friends, and fans for all the love and support.

Thank you to Stuart and CHARIS for this opportunity. And thanks to YOU for supporting live music!

Scan this code for
LYRICS & INSPIRATION
for the 3 original songs
featured in this concert:



or visit...

kristengoodman.com/wearefamily

With Love,
KG





Would like to thank our generous
GRACE NOTES

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www.charischorus.org



Pledge your sustaining donation by joining our monthly "Grace Note" program,
which allows you to make a small contribution every month.

Your gift renews automatically until you decide to stop it.

CHARIS is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and your donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

 **CHARIS**
The St. Louis Women's Chorus
PRESENTS

LIFTING AS WE CLIMB



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NOVEMBER 23
AND 24, 2024**

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CHARISCHORUS.ORG



www.charischorus.org

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facebook.com/charischorus

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We Are Family



WHO WE ARE

CHARIS is a diverse group of women united in our mission to perform music that celebrates and encourages women and the LGBTQ community.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

CHARIS is a non-auditioned chorus that extends an open invitation for membership to women and people with treble voices. Our recruitment party is on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 7:00 pm at First Congregational Church, 6501 Wydown Blvd., Clayton. Our three open rehearsals will be August 13, 20, and 27, 2024, from 7:00–9:15 pm. For other questions, see www.charischorus.org or call (314) 664-9340.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Loretta Haggard and Colleen Gilmore, Co-Presidents
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Julie Glenn	Natalie Nash



SOPRANO I

Donna Baudendistel
Angie Bowland
Jessica Clark
Cary Colman
Chris Fox
Sarah Gillette
Michelle Gralnick
Cindy Henley
Lisa Kastner
Melanie Maesaka
Sandy Padgett
Amelia Reichling
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Ariel Tadlock
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Victoria Anders
Jill Bass
Karen Burton
Ellen Curry

Emily Ellsworth
Penny Frame
Emme Geissal
Colleen Gilmore
Lara Glauber
Loretta Haggard
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Khat Kaye
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Debbie Char*
Lauren Cooksey
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Deb Holmes
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**Section Leaders*

We Are Family



PRESIDENTS' LETTER

Dear family and friends,

It was pretty bold of CHARIS to tackle the concert theme of "We Are Family!" Concepts of "family" are as infinite and complex as life itself.

Our families of origin come in all varieties. Some families like ours result from the heartbreak of relinquishment by birth parents and the joy of adoption. One of our favorite songs tonight is the adoption story in Phil Collins' "You'll Be In My Heart" from Tarzan. No matter what your family of origin looks like, it almost certainly has included deep bonds of love, scars of hurt, and radical changes.

We make families at school and at work and in our leisure time. CHARIS is a chosen family for many of us on the stage - a refuge where we are loved and accepted for exactly who we are. Our family began when we met in CHARIS. CHARIS members have celebrated unions and the arrival of children, stood by each other in heartache, and mourned departures. The two of us find it hard to imagine ever moving away from our CHARIS family. And yet even those singers who have moved away or passed away are still a part of this vibrant, forever CHARIS family. You, our audience are also a vital part of our CHARIS family, as are our sibling organizations, the Gateway Men's Chorus, Black Tulip Chorale, and Band Together.

Our fabulous guest artist, Kristen Goodman, has long been a part of the CHARIS family and a mainstay of the St. Louis musical scene, and we welcome her back from New York City and to the stage. Please take the time to scan the QR code on her program ad which takes you to

her website, so you can learn what inspired the three original songs she performs tonight.

This July, CHARIS will gather in Minneapolis for the quadrennial Festival of GALA Choruses. Imagine singing and celebrating with 6,000 kindred spirits in 120 LGBTQ+-affiliated choruses from around the globe! The two of us have been lucky to appear at all four of CHARIS' prior GALA appearances – Tampa (1996), Miami (2008), and Denver (2012 and 2016). We can't wait to share this transformative experience with over 50 of our CHARIS family this year.

Speaking of family, this concert is especially poignant as we celebrate Stuart Chapman Hill's 7th year with us. He has challenged us musically, moved us emotionally, and modeled what it means to mentor young musicians. Under his leadership, we have grown to about 80 singers strong, and we have had the privilege of watching his student Michaela Cruse transform from singer to Conducting Fellow, to Assistant Artistic Director, and we hope she will assume other roles with CHARIS in the future! It is hard to say goodbye to Stuart. But we are excited about his future, and know he will always be a part of our CHARIS family! Thank you, Stuart, from the bottom of our hearts!

Enjoy the show!

Fondly,

Colleen Gilmore and Loretta Haggard

We Are Family



LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of CHARIS,

Who makes up your family? Talk about a loaded question. The families we inherit and the families we choose are just part of being alive, being human. And if you're like most of the humans I know, family is complex for you. Families can be sources of great joy but also sites of real pain. Even so-called functional families have their scrapes and scars and skeletons secreted in closets.

Sometimes the family members we love most and get along with best will be the ones who hurt us deeply. And, of course, families are always changing: new family ties bloom and are born while others wither and die, and not always, so to speak, from natural causes.

As we take the stage tonight to sing our *We Are Family* concert to you, we have all this complexity in mind. We hope tonight's songs paint a variety of family portraits and that you can see yourself reflected somewhere in them. We open with Reena Esmail's "TaReKiTa," which is a gift from the composer to a certain kind of family: she wrote the piece for the Urban Voices Project, which is a choir of individuals who are currently or have recently been unhoused. Then we sing "All the Wild Wonders," a mystical near-lullaby that wishes a young person well as they discover the world around them. Then we switch gears entirely to sing "Kids!" from *Bye-Bye Birdie*, which rolls its musical eyes at the ways grown-ups struggle to understand "kids these days." "Being Alive," from *Company*, finds its protagonist struggling with, but ultimately accepting, the vulnerability of romantic love and partnership—and then that love ages into the wry and silly commentary of the Beatles' "When I'm Sixty-Four." Then we are joined onstage by our amazing guest artist—more on that later!—before we close the first act with the powerful "Family" from the musical *Dreamgirls*.

In Act II, we open with "Koudjay," whose Haitian Creole lyrics describe the joy of a large, festive gathering—like, say, a family reunion. We pivot to "Life Is Not A Garden," which makes head-on acknowledgement of the ways life, including family life, isn't always a walk in the park. The humorous and charming "The Christians and the Pagans" tells the story of a holiday encounter between two very different branches of one family tree. "Let Me Stay" captures the wistfulness of returning to a childhood home that isn't—because it can't be—what it used to be. "You'll Be In My Heart" comes from Disney's *Tarzan*, which has an adoption story at its center, and is a way for

us to celebrate how adoption brings many families into being. “Stars In Your Bones” zooms way out to remind us we all belong to one universal, elemental family; pay close attention to the stunning text in that one, because no short quotation here can really do it justice. And then we close with—you’ll never guess!—the Sister Sledge classic, “We Are Family.”

Back to that amazing guest artist I mentioned: there are few featured musicians who could be as perfect for this family concert as Kristen Goodman. She truly is part of our family, and not just because she has sung in CHARIS before! I know many of you in the audience are longtime fans of Kristen and her music, and even though she’s based in NYC now, she’s still integral to the fabric of the St. Louis musical community, and we’re privileged to welcome her home. She’s performing three originals tonight, with a little assistance from CHARIS, including one song she wrote specifically for this occasion. She’s a rockstar, and sharing the stage with her is a total treat.

Let me close with a bit of important family news: I am concluding my time as CHARIS’s artistic director, as I’m relocating to start a new teaching position at Michigan State University. It’s a homecoming in one sense, because I went to Michigan State for graduate school, but it certainly feels like leaving home, too. St. Louis is the city where I’ve lived longest since my hometown. My current house is the dwelling I’ve lived in longest since my childhood home. My current position at Webster, and my position with CHARIS, are the two jobs I’ve held longest so far in my career. When I say CHARIS has been a family for me, it’s not the typical bit of self-serving workplace hyperbole. My siblings in CHARIS have done the best of what families do: welcomed me, made me feel safe, challenged me, helped me learn and grow, loved me.

Which brings me to one more important thing about families: they’re pretty hard to shake. My time as artistic director is closing, but my devotion to the CHARIS family is steadfast. I will remain a permanent booster and cheerleader and family member, and I’ll be expecting my invite to the family reunion.

Thank you for being a part of our CHARIS family and for joining us for today’s performance. You are most welcome here. Please do make yourself at home.

Onward,

Stuart Chapman Hill
Artistic Director

We Are Family



DR. STUART CHAPMAN HILL,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dr. Stuart Chapman Hill is a teacher, composer, conductor, and scholar based in St. Louis, Missouri. He is concluding an eight-year stint at Webster University, where he currently is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Music Education. Stuart also has been honored and privileged to serve as the Artistic Director of CHARIS for the last seven years, a chapter that comes to a close after this spring concert and this summer's appearance at GALA Festival in Minneapolis. This fall, Stuart begins a new position as Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at Michigan State University. Stuart's choral compositions are published by G. Schirmer, Galaxy Music, and by Hinshaw Music, which has a composer series in his name. He enjoys serving as a guest conductor and clinician with choirs of all kinds, with recent engagements in Batavia, NY; Murfreesboro, TN; Charlottesville, VA; and New Delhi, India. His scholarship focuses on forging stronger connections between the world of popular music and the curricula of K–12 school music programs, with a specific research interest in investigating the learning practices of popular songwriters.



MICHAELA CRUSE,
ASSISTANT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Michaela Cruse is a St. Louis based certified K–12 teacher, houseplant enthusiast, and proud dog mom. After graduating from Webster University in 2020, she began her adventures as a music teacher. She currently teaches middle school music at North Side Community School, works with CHARIS, the St. Louis Women's Chorus as their Assistant Artistic Director (and enthusiastic Alto 1), and collaborates 1:1 with private students in her music studio to learn skills in voice and piano, and likely a bit of emotional regulation.



KRISTEN GOODMAN (SHE/THEY),
GUEST ARTIST

Kristen Goodman (she/they) (aka “KG”) is a Brooklyn-based multi-hyphenate artist, activist, and creative who graduated in ‘22 from BerkleeNYC with a Masters in Writing and Design for Musical Theater. She is the co-creator of “GOOD SHOW!” a Musical Theater podcast on the Broadway Podcast Network with her sister, Sarah Goodman. Kristen teaches private music lessons in-person in NYC and virtually to students around the country. She returns to St. Louis regularly to perform with womxn’s folk rock tribute band, “kg lang.” Their live album of original songs, “Kristen Goodman - Live in St. Louis with her big band” is available for streaming on all music platforms. KG’s alter-ego, Captain K. Goodlove, can be found singing in burlesque and variety shows, and is the 2023 winner of the “Hollywood Chanteuse” title at the Hollywood Burlesque Festival. KG believes in the power of live entertainment, and strives to create connection, love, and radical joy in all of their work. Kristen would like to thank her parents, family, friends, and fans for all the love and support! More info at kristengoodman.com and on Instagram @kristengoodmansings

We Are Family



SUSAN YOUNG,
ACCOMPANIST

Susan Young has proudly performed with CHARIS, The St. Louis Women's Chorus since 2002. She joined initially as a singing member and Alto section leader, and later became their accompanist, playing piano for the CHARIS spring and fall concerts, PrideFest appearances, local benefit concerts, and GALA Choruses Festivals. Susan served as the pianist and music director for the Episcopal Church of All Saints and Ascension in St. Louis from 2014 through 2019. Susan has also performed on piano as a featured soloist with BandTogether in St. Louis, and as the pianist with the Ginger Snaps Duo at the Scott Joplin International Ragtime Festival.



AMANDA "MANDY" VOTRIAN (SHE/HER/HERS)
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

Mandy has been interpreting professionally in the St. Louis Metro Area since 2009. She is passionate about providing qualified representation and interpretation for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind community in all settings, including those which are most often overlooked. She enjoys interpreting and organizing teams of professionals to interpret concerts, festivals, and performances throughout the St Louis Metro. She is honored to be a part of CHARIS' inclusive-to-all environment.



CHARIS—the St. Louis Women's Chorus was formed after Juliet Jackson, Lucinda Sohn, and Reverend Jane Clark organized the Committee to Unite Women Singers in the fall of 1992, with the goal of creating a chorus open to all women, regardless of cultural background or musical experience. The chorus made its first public appearance on May 23, 1993 at Trinity Episcopal Church in a fund-raiser to benefit Northside AIDS Outreach. CHARIS made its solo debut in October 1993 and has subsequently produced two to three solo performances along with community benefits each year. In addition to Lucinda Sohn, CHARIS has been led by artistic directors Merry Keller, Eric Henson, Kourtney Strade Austin, Jeremiah Selvey, Claire Minnis, and our current director, Stuart Chapman Hill, and our first assistant artistic director, Michaela Cruse.

CHARIS has a rich history of collaboration including regular artistic events with our sister organizations, the Gateway Men's Chorus and Band Together and we look forward to collaborating with Black Tulip Chorale. Over the years, we've welcomed guest artists like Holly Near, Kati Guerra, Lisa Koch, Denise Thimes, and Kim Massie to share the stage and celebrate women and the queer community. We've also enhanced our artistic work with partnerships with other community organizations including That Uppity Theatre Company, Gash-Voigt Dance Company, St. Louis Equality Dance, Symmetry, and Home Remedy. CHARIS has participated in four choral festivals held by the Gay and Lesbian Associations of Choruses (GALA) and is preparing for a fifth festival in Minneapolis in July, 2024.

We are known for our innovative programming. Over the years, CHARIS has performed in many languages and musical styles including world music, madrigal, spirituals, jazz, pop, and classical.

We Are Family

We've tackled challenging topics and made them accessible and entertaining – what other chorus could do concerts about therapy and gender roles and make it work? One of our favorite concerts was a reimagining of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*. This libretto was reworked by three chorus members to tackle more current issues in the wildly popular, *Vegans of Provincetown*, complete with a very butch “Freddy” and sponsorship from Olivia Cruises.

CHARIS is an integral part of the St. Louis community, performing at Pridefests, the Muny, and countless not for profit fundraisers. We support organizations including League of Women Voters, Metropolitan Transgender Umbrella Group (MTUG), Planned Parenthood, and St. Louis Black Pride. As our community and our country have evolved, CHARIS has evolved too and has shared social commentary with choral music about a wide range of issues for women and the LGBTQ+ community including coming out, “don't ask, don't tell,” gender roles and gender fluidity, marriage equality and racial disparity. We've welcomed singers who identify along every part of the gender and sexual orientation spectrum and integrated their voices and their spirits into our work.

We continue to represent a vital and ever-changing arts community and look forward to the future of choral music in St. Louis.



PROGRAM

*featuring Susan Young, piano; Al Ludwig, bass;
Jacob Alan Videmschek, guitar; and Jonathan Padgett, drums*

ACT 1

TaReKiTa

Reena Esmail

sponsored by Donna Dandridge

"Honoring the focus, creativity and love in the CHARIS family."

TaReKiTa was composed as a gift for the Urban Voices Project, a choir of individuals currently experiencing, or having recently experienced, homelessness. The lyrics have no literal meaning, but instead use syllables called "bols" that imitate the sound of the Indian drum, the tabla.

All the Wild Wonders

Sue Johnson and Elizabeth Honey

sponsored by Colleen Gilmore and Loretta Haggard

"Jon, we wish you the beautiful Quetzal bird in the jungle!"

Loretta Haggard, Ellen Curry, and Carol Weisman, soloists

Kids! (from Bye-Bye Birdie)

**Charles Strouse
arr. Alan Billingsley**

sponsored by Cindy Henley

"In 1978, I was in Bye-Bye Birdie at the Centralia, IL Cultural Society. I at age 18 and my actor "husband" in his late 50's sang the duet, "Kids!" It's delightful to sing it again from a different perspective, 46 years later!"

Being Alive

**Stephen Sondheim
arr. Mac Huff**

sponsored by Linda Rubin

"Dedicated to all my friends and family, who make me feel and be alive."

Leslie Shipman, soloist

We Are Family

When I'm Sixty-Four

John Lennon and Paul McCartney
arr. Alan Billingsley

sponsored by the Alto 1s

"We will still love CHARIS when it is 64!!"

Evelyn Kastner, clarinet

GUEST ARTIST: KRISTEN GOODMAN

Just Past Caledonia

Kristen Goodman

Home Is Here

Kristen Goodman

Amelia Rogers and Martha Bransky, soloists

Come Out!

Kristen Goodman

Announcement Song

**new lyrics by Debbie Char, Jennifer Rooks,
and Anita Cleaver**

Family (from *Dreamgirls*)

Jenry Krieger and Tom Eyen
arr. Mac Huff

sponsored by Debbie Char

"In gratitude for Stuart, who will forever be a beloved member of our CHARIS family."

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Koudjay

Sydney Guillaume

sponsored by the Soprano 2s

"With Stuart, we have planted and reaped, wept and laughed, mourned and danced. There has been a time for everything, and our hearts are full."

Life Is Not a Garden

Elizabeth Alexander

sponsored by Rebecca Rubelmann

"In memory of my parents"

Meg "Egg" Wyatt and Kristen Walker-Myers, soloists

The Christians and the Pagans

Dar Williams arr. David Maddux

sponsored by Alto 2s

"Where does magic come from? I think magic's in the learning. So true."

Libby Swanger and Debbie Char, soloists

Let Me Stay

**Heather Maloney
arr. Stuart Chapman Hill**

sponsored by the Soprano 1s

"For all members of CHARIS past and present"

Jenny Lynch and Litzy Flores, soloists

You'll Be In My Heart

**Phil Collins
arr. Mac Huff**

sponsored by Michelle Gralnick

"For Aunt Angie, who was raising monkeys while I was reading all 24 Tarzan books!"

Stars in Your Bones

Joan Szymko

sponsored by Karen Burton

"Remember, the beauty of the Universe shines in you!"

We Are Family

**Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards
arr. Kirby Shaw**

sponsored by The Midnight Moms (Angie Bowland, Lisa Kastner, Melinda Monroe & Nancy Spargo)

"To the complex and beautiful tapestry of family connections both born and chosen. Each is a gift."

featuring guest artist Kristen Goodman

We Are Family

FRIENDS OF CHARIS

*CHARIS expresses thanks to the following people
for their gifts and support during 2022–2023 to date!*

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** denotes Grace Note*



IN-KIND DONATIONS

Do you own a business? Are you skilled or a professional in a particular field? Are you willing to donate some of your product, time and/or skill to CHARIS?

CHARIS has use for all types of in-kind donations. Some examples of donations of this type are our many silent auction items over the years: everything from tickets to the Cardinals and the Fox, House Concerts by Kristen Goodman and Home Remedy, a personal pet portrait by Lisa C. Kastner, and two self-defense baskets.

In exchange we offer acknowledgment of your gift in many forms, from advertising in our program, acknowledgment in the program or from the stage, and/or in-kind tax letters.

If you would like to make an in-kind donation, please call the chorus at 314-664-9340 and make us an offer we can't refuse.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS!

CHARIS—the St. Louis Women's Chorus is proud to have the support from such community-focused businesses. Please consider spending your time and hard-earned money with our friends and advertisers. Tell them CHARIS sent you!



We Are Family

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Principal Accompanist Susan Young
Assistant Artistic Director Michaela Cruse
Sign Language Interpreter Amanda ("Mandy") Votrian
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Jennifer Rooks, and Bridget White
Premiere Sponsors Missouri Arts Commission,
Regional Arts Commission, and William A. Kerr Foundation

A Bittersweet Announcement

After seven years as CHARIS's Artistic Director, and eight years teaching at Webster University, Dr. Stuart Chapman Hill is leaving to pursue a new adventure. He will be returning to Michigan State University, his doctoral alma mater, for a new position as Assistant Professor of Music Education. In his new role at MSU, he will conduct a choir, teach undergraduate and graduate courses in music education, and work with master's and doctoral students on their research projects.

Our Tribute to Dr. Stuart Chapman Hill

Written by: Mary Maxfield

Backstage before a performance, Dr. Stuart Chapman Hill often reminds us that the music we make together is a gift, one that someone in the audience needs more deeply than we can know. What we do know, and what we now need to say, is that the music we've made with Stuart has been a gift for us as well. His presence, leadership, and friendship have been a tremendous gift to us as individuals and to our chorus as a whole.

Over the past seven years, Stuart has guided us through 10 in-person concerts, countless Skittle-shirt-clad "side gigs," and a global pandemic. When our 2018 Meet Me at the Munny show demanded it, Stuart literally tap-danced across the stage. When COVID made choral singing a high-risk activity, he spent months leading sing-alongs on Zoom, on mute. He has never conducted a

performance without considering and reconsidering the content of each song, each act, and each concert. He teaches every note to every voice part, and he regularly works with us to rewrite lyrics for expanded inclusiveness. To quote one of his signature warm-ups, Stuart works tirelessly to assure that "all of our voices and all of our visions" are heard and honored onstage.

Under Stuart's leadership, CHARIS has grown in new directions and to an unprecedented size. His musical rigor and thoughtful teaching have made our Tuesday night rehearsals a joyful and worthwhile commitment. Stuart has regularly reduced us to tears with a well-timed poem and to laughter with a well-timed joke. His deep thoughtfulness and wry humor are as signature as his reminders to stop "taking a jellyfish for a walk" or to "click save" on a successful run-through. By introducing the positions of Conducting Fellow and Assistant Artistic Director, Stuart has assured that we remain in qualified (and familiar) hands during this moment of transition. Stuart, we wish you all the best on this next leg of your journey, and — if we can quote your own lyrics back at you — hope you will continue to "be just the right sort of foolish" and "not let the safe trump the brave." Even as we grieve your departure, we are "clicking save" on the memories and music we have made together, knowing they are gifts that will continue to give for years to come.





Journeys & Destinations



Saturday, June 15th, 2024
Show starts at 7:30pm
Sunday, June 16th, 2024
Show starts at 2:00pm
Tickets - \$20 per person

The Link Auditorium
4504 Westminster Place
Saint Louis, MO 63108

Tickets available at
www.gmestl.org



There Will Be Light

A musical dialogue about mental health

3 p.m., Sunday, May 19, 2024

First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood

100 E. Adams Avenue; Kirkwood, Missouri

Tickets: \$15 at [Humanitix.com](https://www.humanitix.com)
or via QR code





**HELP PROMO CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR
LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN JEFFERSON CITY AND
ENSURE ALL MISSOURIANS THRIVE.**



**“A home isn’t always the house we live in.
It’s also the people we choose to
surround ourselves with.”**

T.J. Klune

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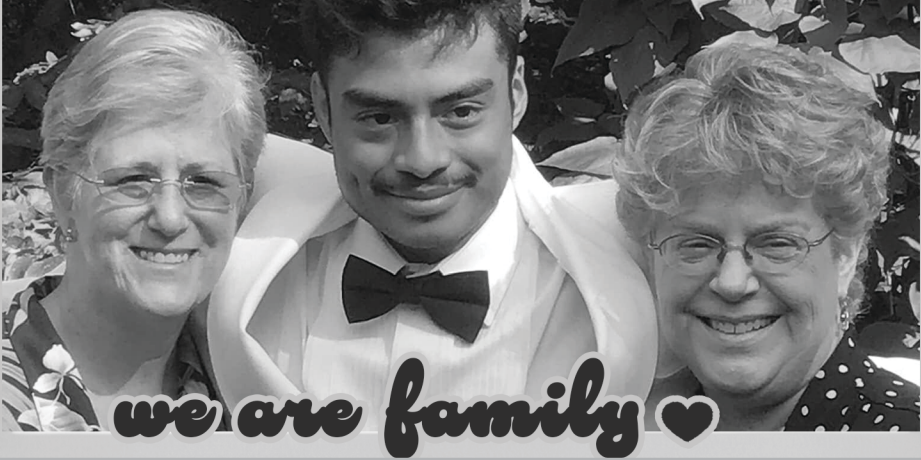
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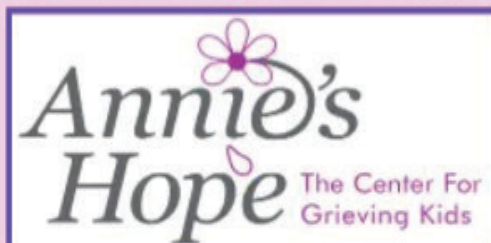
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