



DECEMBER

2023 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Pastor Rosemary Captain

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Advent is an exciting time for children. They probably don't use the word "advent", but they know that Christmas will soon be here. They see the decorations, the lights, the toys all over the stores. That's a sure sign that Christmas is coming.

What about adults? Some people love Advent and they start to bake cookies, hang decorations and lights, go to and give parties, buy pretty dresses and ugly sweaters, go Christmas caroling, some still send Christmas cards while others send emails. Other people watch those busy people mentioned above and simply sit and wait for the Christ child and the beautiful Christmas Eve service at church. Advent is not so exciting for them.

Believe it or not, I'm in the second category. What do I do during Advent? I look for a new and uplifting, inspirational devotional. I'm always looking for a new and different way to present Advent to my congregation, you. It's an old story that everybody knows. Is there anything new I can share with all of you?

This year I discovered a new-to-me devotional called "Preparing for Christmas." It was written by a national bestselling author, Richard Rohr. (*"Advent is not about a sentimental waiting for the Baby Jesus."*) Father Richard Rohr is a Franciscan Priest who is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within mystical and transformational traditions.

For the first Sunday in Advent he writes: "Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:42. Father Rohr, "'Come, Lord Jesus,' the Advent mantra, means that all of Christian history has to live out of a kind of deliberate



emptiness, a kind of chosen non-fulfillment. Perfect fullness is always to come, and we do not need to demand it now. This keeps the field of life wide open and especially open to grace and to a future created by God rather than ourselves. This is exactly what it means to be 'awake,' as the Gospel urges us! We can also use other *a* words for Advent: aware, alive, attentive, alert, awake are all appropriate! Advent is, above all us, a call to full consciousness and a forewarning about the high price of consciousness.

“When we demand satisfaction of one another, when we demand any completion to history on our terms, when we demand that our anxiety or any dissatisfaction be taken away, saying as it were, ‘Why weren’t you this for me? Why didn’t life do that for me?’ we are refusing to say, ‘Come, Lord Jesus.’ We are refusing to hold out for the *full picture* that is always given by God.”

There is more to Father Rohr’s view of this first Sunday of Advent lesson. If you would like a copy of “Preparing for Christmas” let me know. Joy and Peace as we enter Advent.
Pastor Rosemary

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT WILL BE AT 7 PM DECEMBER 24

We promise there will be lots of music and singing of Christmas carols, including the candle light singing of “Silent Night”. **BRING YOUR FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS.**



We will NOT have our usual worship service on Sunday, December 24.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

12/3 Rosemary Williams
12/3 Gene Ganschietz
12/6 Abbey Cohlmeier
12/14 Barron Arbeiter
12/14 Jakob Arbeiter
12/15 Marilyn Paul

12/15 Aaron Drake
12/16 Becky Ballard
12/26 Abby Stewart
12/30 Pat Bregen



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

12/1 Carol & Terry Randle #57

12/19 Nancy & Jim Eisenhauer #53



MEMORIALS

Memorial from Paulette Allen in memory of Terry Allen, Raymond & Norma Taubig and Rick Taubig



PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Dawn Cipponeri family, Carson Edwards, Marilyn Paul, Syd Safriet, David Seneczyn, Amy Smith, Yvonne Weber, Rosemary Williams, all caregivers who perform the work of God to those who need help.

USHERS FOR DECEMBER:

December 3: Jan and Tom Miller

December 10: Sue Williams and Chuck Kistler

December 17: Christina Hardin-Weiss and Eric Moayer

December 24: (7:00 p.m.) Ginny and Sue Ganschinetz

December 31: Judy Schmitt and Nancy Eisenhauer



CHOIR



My favorite singing month of the year! The choir will sing twice: December 10 during worship at 10:00 a.m., and on Sunday, December 24 during the Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7:00 p.m. (There will be no morning worship on that day.)

Note to choir members: we will practice portions of the Christmas cantata after church on December 10.

Hope to see many of you for worship this month!

Church Council

It's that time of year again. We need two people to volunteer to join the Church Council. The council meets once a month via zoom. The meetings usually last less than an hour. The term is for two years with the opportunity to volunteer for an additional two years. The council is the eyes and ears of the congregation. The council communicates with the Pastor as to the needs of the congregation. Likewise, the Pastor makes suggestions to the council on issues and needs that come to her attention.



The council members will be voted on at the January 21 Congregational Meeting after worship. **If you might be interested in joining the council, speak to Sue Williams Council President or the**

Pastor. Thank you for your participation.

Evening Circle

December is a busy month for everyone including our Evening Circle.

Dec. 3rd - Bring Josiah Armstrong's (KinderCottage) child's pre-wrapped gifts to church. They need to be delivered by Dec. 8th. Remember to place a post-it on the gift so we know items he received.

Dec. 10th - Plates of 12 different Christmas cookies will be available for sale. **We are asking all bakers to donate 1 dozen cookies.**

Dec. 17th - Our meeting and Christmas party after church. Bring appetizers or treats to share. Also there will be an extra offering for the Food Pantry.

Enjoy a couple Haiku Poems:

Smell - Chestnuts roasting
Hear - The carolers singing
See - Happy Faces

Snowflakes dance and fall
Silent night, a peaceful calm
Christmas magic calls.

Hope everyone holds the true meaning of Christmas in their hearts.
Eileen Gammon, Co-Chair



Poinsettia's Sale

Poinsettias will be for sale December 3 and December 10.
Red, White and Pink will be available to order at a cost of \$10 each.

You may also give a Memorial for a loved one for the Garden of Memories.

**REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO JOIN US IN WORSHIP
SEND THEM EACH A CHRISTMAS CARD
SO THEY KNOW THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.**

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Ivy Schneider
213 Merriweather Lane
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Yvonne Weber
200 St. Clair Drive
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Elaine Whitney
120 Lynnhaven
Belleville, IL 62223

Becky Ballard
1211 Moreland Apt 12
Belleville, IL 62223

*Rosemary Williams
201 S Belt West Apt 10
Belleville, IL 62220

Darlene Schaperkoetter
1258 Larkspur Drive
Mascoutah, IL 62258



*Please note that Rosemary Williams' address has changed.

December

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Service of Word & Sacrament @10am Fellowship time Poinsettias sale	4	5	6	7 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting	8	9
10 Service of Word @ 10 am Choir rehearsal @ 9 am and after worship Pointsettias sale Christmas Cookie sale	11	12	13 Church Council Meeting via Zoom @ 7 pm	14 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting	15	16
17 Service of Word @ 10 am Evening Circle after worship	18	19	20	21 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting	22	23
24 No 10 am service Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 7 pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27	28 AA Meeting	29	30
31 Service of Word @ 10 am						

