

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
10207 LINCOLN TRAIL FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, IL 62208
397-6323

NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2017



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas will be here before we know it. Are we feeling “merry and bright”? If we listen to the daily newscasters, maybe not so much. If the news wasn’t bad enough, there are always some pessimistic people who interpret the bad news as “doom and gloom.” “We’re all going to hell in a hand basket,” as the saying goes. What is there to be “merry” about? Can a baby born so long ago in a barn in the middle east really make a difference?

Many years ago, I decided to read the Bible from cover to cover, starting at Genesis all the way to Revelation. I must confess that I skipped a few books. Numbers was very interesting and I didn’t understand the Song of Songs. What did catch my attention was in the First Testament Books of Judges and 1& 2 Kings. Many kings, back to back, did not follow the Lord of Abraham. One after another, “did evil in the sight of the Lord” or “did not know the Lord.” They did not follow the laws of Moses. God sent many Prophets to tell these kings the consequences of their actions against God, but they didn’t listen.

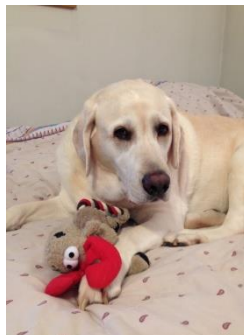
In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 23, Jesus laments, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Maybe that’s why God sends us God’s beloved Son. We didn’t listen to anyone else. Perhaps a baby born so long ago in a barn **can** make a difference in our hearts, in our souls, and in our lives . . . if we are willing.

Something to ponder this Christmas season. God’s richest blessings to you all.

Merry Christmas

from Pastor Rosemary and Ben



AMONG OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Funeral:

The service for Gene Brown, a member since 1961, was held Tuesday, November 21. We extend our sympathy to his wife Jeanette and their family.

December Birthdays:

12/3 Rosemary Williams
12/3 Gene Ganschinetz
12/6 Abbey Cohlmeier
12/6 Wyatt Vance

12/14 Barron Arbeiter
12/14 Jakob Arbeiter
12/15 Aaron Drake
12/20 Emily Whitaker
12/30 Pat Bregen

December Anniversaries:

12/1 Carol & Terry Randle # 51
12/12 Eileen & Jack Gammon # 47
12/19 Nancy & Jim Eisenhower # 47



Happy Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving!
Whether great or small,
Experience and conflict,
Let's thank one and all.
The cry of a babe,
A father's caress,
Guidelines and rules,
Expecting no less.
A kiss from a dog,
Teaching him tricks.
Two brothers fighting,
Each get in their licks.
Hand-stitched quilts,
Each made with care.
Pumping the tires
With just the right air.
Cardinals and bluejays
Eating fresh seeds
While squirrels and sparrows
Take what they need.
Children excited by
Learning to read.
Seeing the dewdrops
In glistening beads.
Death and slow changes
Bring on the new.

Exchanging some old thoughts
For new points of view.
We thank you for all,
From which we can gain.
All days can't be sunny,
Sometimes we need rain.

-Lynnette Schuepbach, Illinois South Conference
Director of Communications

HANGING OF THE GREEN (Let's decorate!)

Sunday, **December 3**, is the first Sunday in Advent. It is also the day we will once again decorate the narthex, sanctuary and fellowship hall. Plan to stay after church for a **pizza lunch**, followed by putting up the decorations. We need those who can climb a ladder and those who stay on the ground; those who can take orders and those who can give orders! Remember, many hands make light work! It shouldn't take us long if we work together.



PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Here we are at the end of the year already and it has been quite a year for St. John. In February we said goodbye to Pastor Jim and Cami and prepared ourselves for the arrival of our Designated Pastor Rosemary Captain. The Congregation voted to put a new roof on the building and the Council voted to replace the flat roof with a truss roof system. We voted to sell the Parsonage and use the proceeds to pay for the new roof. With the help of Jim Eisenhauer we replatted and rezoned the Parsonage property so we could list it for sale. Next year should be just as busy as we will hopefully vote to call Pastor Rosemary as our permanent Pastor and have the Installation. The new roof will be put on in the Spring and hopefully the Parsonage will be sold before that happens. It looks like next year may be just as busy as this one.

Susan Williams

NOTES AND THANK YOU'S

I'm so happy to be able to attend worship again and so grateful to my church family for all their visits, cards and phone calls. Special thanks to Pastor Rosemary and Judy for keeping my spirits up.

Ginny Ganschietz

EVENING CIRCLE

The Evening Circle is still busy as the year draws to a close. Our annual Bake Sale will be held December 10th after Worship so break out those recipes and start baking. The child we are sponsoring this year from Kinder Cottage is an 11th month old boy. Please check the bulletin boards for more information about him. Gifts should be brought to the church no later than Dec. 10th. Lets give this little boy a great Christmas.

Our next meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 18th and this will be our Christmas Party. Please bring a dessert or snack to share with the group. Carol and Eileen always have fun evening planned.

The Evening Circle meets the third Monday of the month and all ladies of St. John are welcome. Hope to see you in December!

Sunday School

If you were at the chili cook-off sponsored by the Sunday School staff in late October, you know what tasty chili-makers we have! Sue Williams won first prize for her chili. Yummy! Everyone enjoyed tasting the assorted offerings and then making a meal of the chili, hotdogs and desserts.

Some of us then delivered Thanksgiving goodies as well as other needed food items to the food pantry and got a tour of the facility, thanks to pantry president Sue Ganschinietz. The city has provided a wonderful facility for serving those in need of help to feed their families. The pantry has a procedure to see that all are fed and no one abuses the efforts of the community. Impressive program!

The theme for this Sunday School year is "Missions Possible". We are working on a different mission each month. In November we assembled the makings for 14 birthday bags to be given out at the Fairview Heights Food Pantry. In December we will be making Christmas cards for delivery by Home Instead. Each card is a message from St. John to those who are not able to get out and may have little contact with people.

Our mission pennies for December will be for OCWM.

We will be looking for people to sign up to do refreshments after worship on the first Sunday of each month. Please consider signing up. Thank you.

Christmas Program

Be sure to be in church on **Christmas Eve morning, Sunday, December 24!** We will have an all-church Christmas program. Adults, as well as children will participate. We will be building an interesting Christmas tree! Families with children – watch for an email with further instructions. Enjoy the story of Christmas in scripture, song and decorating!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

There is nothing like being in a quiet, candlelit sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Come to St. John at 7:00 p.m. for a service of Word, music (choir and instrumental), and Holy Communion. Receive the blessing of worship on the eve of Jesus' birth.



Upcoming Forum...

OPEN & AFFIRMING: Living Openly, A Public and Visible Church will be held on Saturday March 3 from 9 am - 3:45 pm at Parkway UCC, 2841 North Ballas Road, St. Louis, Missouri. Registration begins at 8:30 am. Coffee, pastries and fruit will be available. Displays and bookstore will be open.

If you are an Open and Affirming congregation, talking about Open and Affirming, thinking about starting the conversation, or wanting to explore how to be effective allies, there will be something for you and your church. Be in conversation with others, learn what it means to be Open and Affirming and how to fully express extravagant welcome to all God's children.

Edith Guffey, Kansas/Oklahoma Conference Minister will be our keynote speaker/preacher for the day.

For additional information please contact: Lorin Cope, Convener, Gateway ONA at lcpe@eden.edu. Registration information will be available in January.



THE ANNUAL ISC PRIDE CHRISTMAS PARTY will be Saturday Dec 2 from 2 - 4 pm **HERE** at **St. John United Church of Christ**, 10207 Lincoln Trail in Fairview Heights. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share, and come prepared for a little trivia and a lot of fun. Our party is the same day as the Christmas party at DuBois Center, but DuBois Center's party doesn't start till 5 pm. We'll wrap up in time for you to attend both, if that's in your plans for the day.

EVERYONE IS INVITED!!

BAKE SALE 1 BAKE SALE ! BAKE SALE !

Yes the Evening Circle BAKE SALE is quickly approaching.

December 10, 2017

L- Room

After Church service

Bring your baked goodies and plan to **buy** someone else's special Christmas baked items. All donated goodies appreciated. Any monies will go to mission projects.

RAFFLE FOR HAND MADE TABLE TOPPER

We will also be selling tickets for a raffle of some of Nancy's handiwork. You can be tickets Dec 3 & Dec. 10 before worship starts. The drawing will be during the Bake Sale after worship on December 10. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.



THE BELLEVILLE CHRISTIAN CENTER

During the month of November, the donations that the children have been collecting during worship have been going to the **Belleville Christian Center**.

This ministry is located at 104 South 17th Street in Belleville and serves the homeless and anyone in need. They provide a Breakfast Brunch every Sunday and Thursday morning. They have Freestore Hours two days a week where clothing, housewares, and other items are

for "sale" FOR FREE to those in need.

Unique at this ministry are showers and washing machines that are available for those who need of clean clothes and clean bodies. Spiritual support is also available including worship services several times a week by Pastor Gerry Brandmeyer. Just as Jesus turned no one away, neither does this facility.

Donations of money or volunteers to help with meals are always welcome.

Call 1-618-235-1643 for more information.

We are thankful that Becky Riess brought this ministry to our attention.

Our Pennies for Mission for November for this ministry amounted to \$159.60.

Thank you.



A CALL FOR HELP!

Due to recent events in worship facilities around the world and in our country, Rev. Shana Johnson, our Conference Pastor, is recommending that all our UCC churches establish a safety and security committee to access our church facility for proactive steps that we can take to protect our congregation. (See related letter in this newsletter.)

We are in the process of forming such a team.

Please let Pastor Rosemary know if you would be willing to serve in that capacity. Assessments will be performed and improvements suggested. We can invite members of the Fairview Heights Police Force

and the Fire Department to also come do the same. After actions have been taken, this team will have to meet only periodically for reassessment and evaluation.

Thank you in advance to helping all of us worship in peace, secure in knowing we have done the best we can to protect ourselves. Pastor's phone 660-8894 or email

gcaptain@charter.net

OUR CHURCH WORKERS FOR DECEMBER

USHERS

12/3 Jan & Tom Miller
12/10 Dorothy Ovelgoenner & Wayne Schlosser
12/17 Cassie & Ed Myers
12/24 Rosemary Williams & Carol Bulva
Christmas Eve Sue Ganschinetz, Wayne Schlosser, Becky Riess & Sue Williams

LITURGISTS

12/3 Sue Williams
12/10 Nancy Eisenhauer
12/17 Mary Lou Baum
12/24 Anne Eisenhauer
12/31 Judy Schmitt

LITURGICAL READINGS FOR DECEMBER

DECEMBER 3, 2017 **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – PEACE**
Isaiah 64:1-9

DECEMBER 10, 2017 **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – HOPE**
Isaiah 40:1-11

DECEMBER 17, 2017 **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – JOY**
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

DECEMBER 24, 2017 **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – LOVE**
CHRISTMAS EVE 7 PM SERVICE
Isaiah 9:2-7

DECEMBER 31, 2017 **FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**
Galatians 4:4-7



These people were remembered during worship at Totenfest, November 26, 2017

**TOTENFEST NOVEMBER 29, 2017
REMEMBERING THESE LOVED ONES**

Alan Canterbury:	October 4, 1932 – September 16, 2017
Lowell "Gene" Brown:	February 6, 1941 – November 7, 2017
Kennath Ford :	July 28, 1934 – November 6, 2017
Arline K. Gerber:	October 26, 1936 – April 17, 2017
Patrick Lee Good:	1953 - 2017
Joyce Hayes:	November 24, 1955 – June 19, 2017
Verna Koch:	April 30, 1918 – December 31, 2016
Delmar "Bud" Riess:	June 20, 1931 – June 7, 2017
Joan Wilburn:	June 8, 1928 – May 30, 2017
Michael Wilburn:	July 27, 1951 – August 30, 2017



December Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> ● SC Christmas party 2-4 p.m. ✓
<u>3</u> ● Worship at 10 a.m. with Holy Communion with fellowship time after worship ✓ ● Decorate church after worship ✓	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> ● Fellowship hall rented in afternoon ✓
<u>10</u> ● Sunday Worship 10 a.m. ✓ ● Bake Sale after worship ✓	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> ● Church Council meets 8 p.m. at Eisenhower's ✓	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> ● Sunday Worship 10 a.m. ✓	<u>18</u> ● Evening Circle 7 p.m. Christmas party ✓	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>24</u> ● Sunday Worship 10 a.m. ✓ ● Candle light service & communion at 7 p.m. ✓	<u>25</u> ● Merry Christmas - office closed ✓	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u> ● Sunday Worship 10 a.m. ✓						

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

We expect too much at Christmas. Feasting. Fun. The perfect present. All that anticipation. TAKE IT EASY. LOVE'S the thing.....The rest is tinsel.

CHRISTMAS GARDEN OF MEMORIES

Poinsettias will be on sale December 3rd and 10th . They will be \$10.00 again this year.



LOOKING AHEAD!!!

Communion in January will be on the **2ND SUNDAY, January 14** instead of the first Sunday, January 7.



Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

November 9, 2017

In the wake of the most recent shooting in our country, we have been once again reminded of how precious life is and how fleeting our feelings of safety and security can be. Although it may seem a bit daunting, now is the time to talk honestly about such things, acknowledge our fears and help our congregations grapple with the reality that sanctuaries might not be the safe spaces we all desire them to be.

Many in your pews are already asking tough questions like, “What would we do if something like that happened in our church? Are we prepared for such an event?” I have overheard conversations about having “armed security” on Sunday mornings. As leaders we must address these justified concerns and offer some practical safety measures our churches can take. We also need to model how to be prepared without escalating anxiety and causing more fear or unsafe situations for those we are called to serve.

Over the years, our Insurance Board has offered valuable resources about how churches and ministries of the Church might most appropriately respond to these situations. In a recent letter that was shared with the Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ, Timothy Harris, President & CEO of the Insurance Board, encourages pastors and church leaders to talk openly about the following questions:

“What role should ushers perform in the congregation, including being responsive to safety and security of congregants; evacuating them using all available exits; being trained in First-Aid/CPR/AED; having the ability to assess threats of unwanted visitors/intruders; or being aware of, and communicating, knowledge of a specific threat or ongoing domestic dispute?”

When was the last conversation with staff/volunteers about emergency preparedness, including conducting actual drills?

Are volunteers/staff familiar enough with the premises to know the best places to exit or shelter in place, if necessary?

Are there effective ways to notify others on the premises of an imminent threat (fire alarms/public address system, etc.)? Do people know where these are?

Where can a church find resources available to assist?”

Another important question we need to consider and talk about is concealed weapons. In 2013, Illinois passed the concealed weapon law. However, many places of worship have decided to adopt a “gun free” policy and “gun free” signs and stickers are posted on the premises. A “gun free” zone means legally a person carrying must disclose this information as soon as they are on the premises.

Although it is true that this is not a fool proof measure, most experts still do not recommend encouraging civilians to carry guns into the pews. As the Insurance Board of the UCC wisely reminds us, law enforcement has often said, *“Congregants with guns in the pews may create confusion once law enforcement officials arrive at the scene. This could further exacerbate an already tense situation. If a church decides to provide armed security, it should be provided by an off-duty, uniformed law enforcement officer. A law enforcement officer in uniform may deter an event from happening, and a law enforcement official is best trained to react to a hostile situation.”*

Some other resources you might want to familiarize yourself with and share are the following:

- A FEMA 5 minute video of what to do in the event of an active shooter situation <https://www.ready.gov/active-shooter>
- Information about ALICE training. ALICE is an acronym for “ALERT, LOCKDOWN, INFORM, COUNTER and EVACUATE.” <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training/worship/>
- Tip sheets from the National Disaster Interfaith Network that are a part of their *Be A Ready Congregation* curriculum http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php
- consider how you will begin these important conversations with the leaders in your congregations and your entire faith community. May God continue to richly bless all of your ministries,

• Rev. Shana Johnson
Conference Minister, Illinois South Conference

Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One In the Body of Christ