



DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL

618-397-6323

Website: www.stjohnfairview.org

Email address: stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com

Pastor Rosemary Captain
revrosemarycaptain@gmail.com

Dear Sisters and Brothers of faith,

You might get tired of me sending you meditations from Rev. Cameron Trimble, but I could not pass up sharing this one.

“The strong one is not the one who overcomes others by force, but the one who controls themselves when angry.” — Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Sahih al-Bukhari

There’s a story in the Islamic tradition with a lesson for all of us today.

Each day, a woman would wait for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to walk past her home, and every day, as he passed, she would throw garbage on him. It was not a one-time incident—it was routine. He never responded with anger. He never retaliated. He simply continued on his way.

Then one day, something changed. There was no trash. No shouting. Just silence. Noticing her absence, the Prophet asked after her. He discovered she was ill, too sick to leave her bed. So he went to her home, not to rebuke her, but to check on her. To offer care. To see if she needed anything.

She was astonished by his kindness. Her heart softened. According to tradition, that simple act of mercy began a transformation in her life.

CAMERON'S COMMENTS

The story has become part of the moral imagination of millions. It's not just about kindness. It's about the strength to interrupt cycles of harm. It's about choosing a path of compassion even when justified in doing otherwise.

It's also a cautionary tale for us now.

We are a culture trained to retaliate. We speak of strength in terms of dominance. Our leaders win by demeaning, not by dignifying. Our politics rewards cruelty, and our media monetizes outrage.

But this story offers a different vision of power, one that's deeply spiritual, relational, and subversive. The Prophet's restraint wasn't weakness. It was moral clarity. It came from a place of profound spiritual integrity and a commitment to a justice that does not require vengeance.

This kind of mercy is not passive. It is active, deliberate, and fiercely humane. It invites us to ask:

- What might change if we met hostility with humanity?
- What healing could begin if we refused to answer harm with more harm?
- What strength would we discover if we allowed love to interrupt the cycle?

We are in this together, Cameron

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.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

12/3 Gene Ganschinetz
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 #59
12/19 Nancy & Jim Eisenhower #55



PRAYER LIST: Camille Abboud, Ingrid Alexiou, Becky Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Private Ben Boyle, Lorraine Brown, Geralyn Gammon, Russ Hartmann, Neal Holiday, Marilyn Paul, Ella Perez, Pam and Syd Safriet, Gloria Stephens, Yvonne Weber, Sue and Dave in Florida.

USHERS FOR DECEMBER:

December 7: Tom & Jan Miller
December 14: Eileen Gammon, Jane Cohlmeier
December 21: Eric Moayer, Tom Miller
December 24 : Ganschinetz Family
December 28: Lew Thomasino, Nancy Eisenhower





CHOIR

In addition to singing on December 21, choir will present portions of a cantata on Christmas Eve. We are spending extra time in rehearsal for that. You don't want to miss it! Nancy

CHURCH COUNCIL

We had a full agenda at our November council meeting. Here are the highlights:

- Budgets for this year and next were discussed. We are doing fairly well for this year, but thus far, giving is lagging behind expenses slightly. Costs have been a little higher than budgeted, and will increase for next year, of course. We are looking to replace our bookkeeper, who passed away recently, and that is an unknown cost. In the meantime, Ginny is doing overtime keeping the books for us!
- **If you know anyone who might be interested in the bookkeeping position, contact Ginny Ganschietz.**
- We are waiting for a bid to repair the parking lot in the handicapped parking area
- A bid was accepted for snow removal this winter. (Hopefully we won't need it!) The contractor will be instructed to remove snow when we call. If it snows during the week, removal may not be necessary.
- The Hanging of the Green will be on Sunday, November 30, after church. Please join us!
- Looking ahead – if you are interested in serving on Council, please contact a current Council member. Monthly meetings are on zoom.
- **The Church Council is looking into purchasing a system for hearing impaired folks.** There are several on the market. If this service was provided, would you be interested in using it? Please answer! This will give us guidance about how many people we should provide for.

CIRCLE

GLAD TIDINGS TO ALL!

Circle has a lot of activities; planned for December.

Members, please bring your Christmas presents wrapped to church by Dec. 7th for our Kindercottage child, Kacelynn. Also remember to bring your signed Christmas cards for Carol Bulva to distribute.

On Dec. 14th, we will have our meeting after church in the L-Room. Bring your Oct. thru Dec. offerings and a little extra for an offering to go to the Food Pantry. After our meeting; we will have Christmas social time, bring an appetizer or item to share for a light lunch.

On Dec. 21st all members please bring a batch of 18 cookies early to the kitchen and Ginny & helper will divide them into assorted plates. The variety plates will be sold after church on the 21st for \$6.00 each.

Hope everyone can make it to our Dec. activities!!!!

Eileen Gammon, Co-Chair

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

Did you know in 1955, a Colorado Sears store misprinted a phone number, & kids wound up calling NORAD (the North America Aerospace Defense Command) instead of **SANTA**.

Ever since then, this government agency is charged with keeping the air lanes clear for **SANTA!**

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Carol Bulva

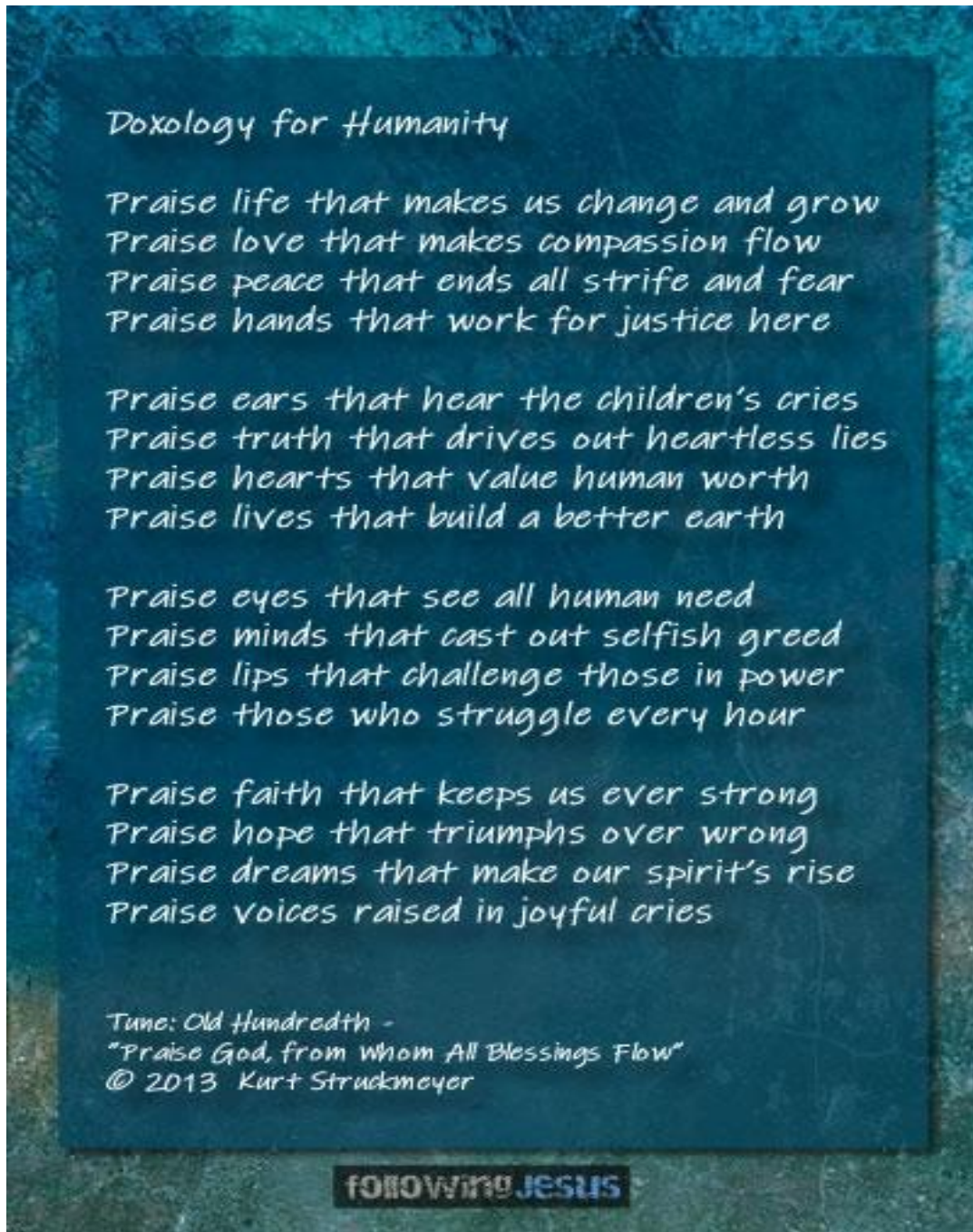


Poinsettia

Poinsettias will be for sale **November 30** at a cost of approximately \$10 - \$12 each. You may also give a Memorial for a loved one for the Garden of Memories.

Doxology for Humanity

Kurt Struckmeyer wrote this for Thanksgiving in 2013 when his table included those born in the USA, Iraq, Korea, and Ethiopia. With Christians, Muslims, and “nones” united, they sang this Doxology together as a common prayer for peace and justice in the world.



ATTENTION BAKERS



Once again, the Circle will have cookies for sale for \$6 a dozen on **Sunday, December 21** after service. The dozen cookies will be home baked and donated by church friends and family. You will receive 12 different cookies!!

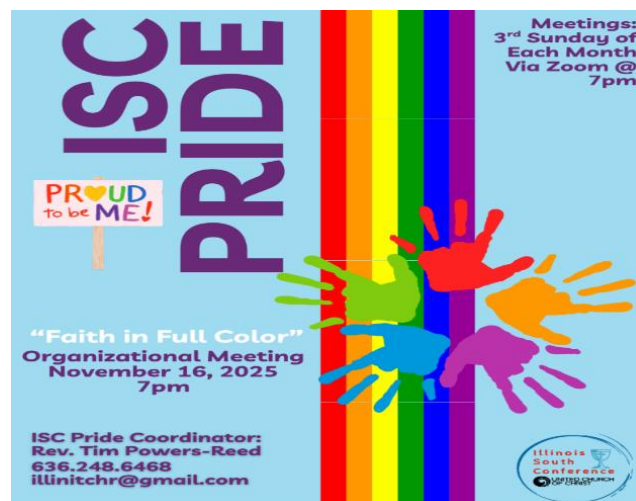
Now BAKERS – please everyone that can---bake and donate a batch of 12-18 cookies before church that Sunday. If you need someone to pick up your cookies, let me know. I know I sure enjoyed tasting everyone else's cookies and look forward to it again. Ginny Ganschinietz

Do you know anyone not receiving our Newsletter ?

The St John UCC Newsletter is emailed out on a monthly basis to our members. The Newsletter lists important dates, updates, valuable information, along with inspiring words of wisdom. Please update your email address with the office if something has changed or if you know someone that used to receive it, but is no longer receiving it. There have been several email addresses returned undeliverable.

You can turn in note after church service or you can call 618 397-6323 to leave a message or send an email to stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com. We would hate for you to miss an important update.

FAITH IN FULL COLOR



Mission Moment

Mission Moment from November 2025

It has been over a year since we had a mission moment about the Open and Affirming Coalition of which our church is a part. It was last year we donated over \$1000 to the Coalition. The Church Council voted to try again this year, and envelopes are in the Narthex to use for donations.

Why we need to support the LGBTQ+ community is explained by the acting executive director of the Coalition, the Rev. Derek Terry. His June 18 declaration was in response to **that** day's U.S Supreme Court decision. Here is Rev. Terry's poignant statement.

"Today's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold Tennessee's **ban** on gender-affirming care for transgender youth is a moral failure and a heartbreaking injustice. This ruling abandons vulnerable children and their families to the political whims of state governments, disregarding the lived realities, medical consensus, and human dignity of transgender youth.

"As people of faith committed to justice and radical inclusion, the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ grieves this ruling and the harm it inflicts. We reject the idea that any government has the right to deny life-saving, evidence-based healthcare because of a young person's gender identity. We reject a theology that would permit such cruelty. And we reject the misuse of power that seeks to control, erase, and endanger trans lives.

"This decision is not just a legal setback—it is a spiritual wound. Trans and nonbinary youth are beloved children of God, created in the divine image, worthy of care, protection, and the fullness of life. Every attack on their rights is an attack on the sacredness of creation itself.

"We are clear: Our trans and nonbinary siblings are not alone. We will not abandon you. The church, when it is truly living into the Gospel, must stand with the marginalized, defend the oppressed, and speak boldly against unjust laws.

"This ruling does not end the fight. It intensifies our call to action. We call on every Open and Affirming congregation to:

- **Create concrete safety plans** for supporting trans youth and families.
- **Partner with local advocacy groups** working on legal, medical, and emotional support.

- **Preach and teach boldly** that trans lives are sacred.
- **Proclaim without apology** that our faith compels us to resist hatred in all its forms.

“To our transgender and non-binary youth: You are not a political issue. You are not a debate. You are loved, needed, and holy. We see you. We fight for you. We will never stop.

“Let justice roll down. Let love rise up. And let the church be known not for silence, but for sacred resistance.”

And I say AMEN!

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

Becky Ballard
1211 Moreland Apt 12
Belleville IL 62223

Ivy Schneider
213 Merriweather Ln
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Yvonne Weber
200 St Clair Dr
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Jackie Canterbury
105 W Julie St Apt C
Shiloh IL 62269



Hope for the Holidays Drive

This year, through Hoyleton’s Hope for the Holidays Drive, we are preparing to bring the joy of Christmas to more than 450 children in Foster Care and Therapeutic Residential Care and to another 150 families through Puentes de Esperanza and Behavioral Health Services. Many of these children have walked difficult roads, and your kindness helps.



St John United Church of Christ,

On behalf of Deaconess Nurse Ministry, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$177.69 on September 30, 2025. Your support helps us continue providing whole person care that offers the healing love of God to anyone in need, free of charge. We deeply appreciate your compassion and care, and we are grateful for your contribution in our mission.

Thank you for the critical role you play in this work through your prayers and support of Deaconess Nurse Ministry. Your kind and generous gift helps us continue our mission.

Many blessings,

Tameka Brown, Executive Director

A BIG THANK YOU!

TO ALL THE GENEROUS St. John Family.

Most know my home was spared from a fire, but did have smoke damage. Everyone has offered to help me in any way and have kept me in their prayers. I truly appreciated all that have helped in any way; especially the CIRCLE group.

Thanks again for all the love and support,
Eileen Gammon

As we come to the closing of 2025 and begin 2026, don't forget to look at and sign up to volunteer to host Coffee and Fellowship time.



Sunday November 30, after church. Come join us to decorate the sanctuary and narthex.

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7pm	5	6
7 Service of Word @ 10 am Fellowship Time	8	9	10 Church Council Meeting via Zoom @ 7 pm	11 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7 pm Quilters 9 – 2 pm	12	13
14 Service of Word @ 10 am Circle Holiday Meeting	15	16	17	18 Zoom Bible Study @ 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7 pm	19	20
21 Service of Word @ 10 am Christmas Cookie Sale Choir rehearsal @ 9 am and after worship	22	23	24 Choir sings at Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 7 pm	25 AA Meeting 7 Merry Christmas!	26	27
28 Service of Word @ 10 am	29	30	31			