

St. Johns United Church of Christ

News from Pastor Ken

February 2024

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Ahhhh... February, it is a funny little, short month. The Christmas and New Year celebrations are over, spring and Easter are yet to arrive. It has its challenges for some of us with too little sun and too much cold. In spite of that, I have come to appreciate this as a quite time of reflection.

Lent begins a little early this year starting on Ash Wednesday, February 14. It happens this early every few years. Last time was 2018. The wonderful part is Lent provides us a wonderful opportunity to consider and pray about how we can get closer to being the person God would have us to be and to consider what it is God would have us to do.

Unfortunately, like many church/religious (not sure if that should be a little "c" or a big "C") practices, Lent seems to have become just another church season. This is MOST unfortunate. Equally unfortunate is that many of those that do practice often consider Lent simply a time of giving up something we like for a few days. I think that just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness contemplating his ministry, we too are called during Lent to spend time considering our own ministry. Let us use this time for planning and preparing. Lent is a time of spiritual preparation. I invite you not to simply give up something but to take time to prepare your spirit for an exciting new journey. Here are a couple of suggestions. Spend an extra few minutes each day in prayer and meditation. Read a book on spirituality, commit to reading the upper room every morning with your coffee (it is only a small page), read one proverb every day from the bible (there are 31), commit to a daily and intentional act of kindness, you get the idea. Prepare yourself for what God has planned for you.

However, as excited as I may sound about Lent, I am still very much enjoying this time in Epiphany. The whole idea of Epiphany keeps revealing itself to me every time I notice some trivial things like driving home from a late afternoon appointment and realizing it is staying light outside later and later. Ahhh... Epiphany. Epiphany, that moment when things are revealed to us. I love experiencing those ah-ha moments. Those are the moments when something becomes clear to me that was not clear to me before. I have been told and it

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Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued

has been proven to me that if we continue to maintain a working relationship with God, we WILL have spiritual experiences. This is not a maybe statement but an absolute statement. We just need to be aware enough to notice them. Isn't that what Epiphany is all about? Learning to trust God enough to let God guide us and teach us, in spite of what we think is a better way. Allowing ourselves to learn how to grow and live more spirit filled lives. Then doing so! When we do that, we allow ourselves to be present to and experience a never-ending number of miracles that occur in us and around us.

For those who are anxious about whether you are ready to do what it is that God may call you to do, remember that God does not call the prepared but prepares the called.

During this Epiphany season, it is my hope that you allow God the opportunity to shine more brightly in you and through you. May each of us bring a little more light to the world that so desperately needs it as we prepare ourselves for Lent.

Remember that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here.

Take care and be well, Peace,
Ken

Happy Birthdays in February

2/2 Carolyn Hosford
2/18 John DeLude
2/26 Lynn Andrews

Happy Anniversaries in February

2/8 Lynn & Steve Andrews



Military Prayer List

I will be including a list in the newsletter of our men and women in the military, to acknowledge those who serve and to pray for their safety. Please submit your love one's, family member or friend's name, rank, and branch of service to be placed on the list.

Joshua Bieske	Sgt. First Class	US Air Force
Lacey Tite	Security	US Navy

Worship Ministry

Volunteers Needed

Please sign-up

Please consider signing up for the ministries of Usher/ Greeter, Liturgists, Communion Servers, and Altar Care.

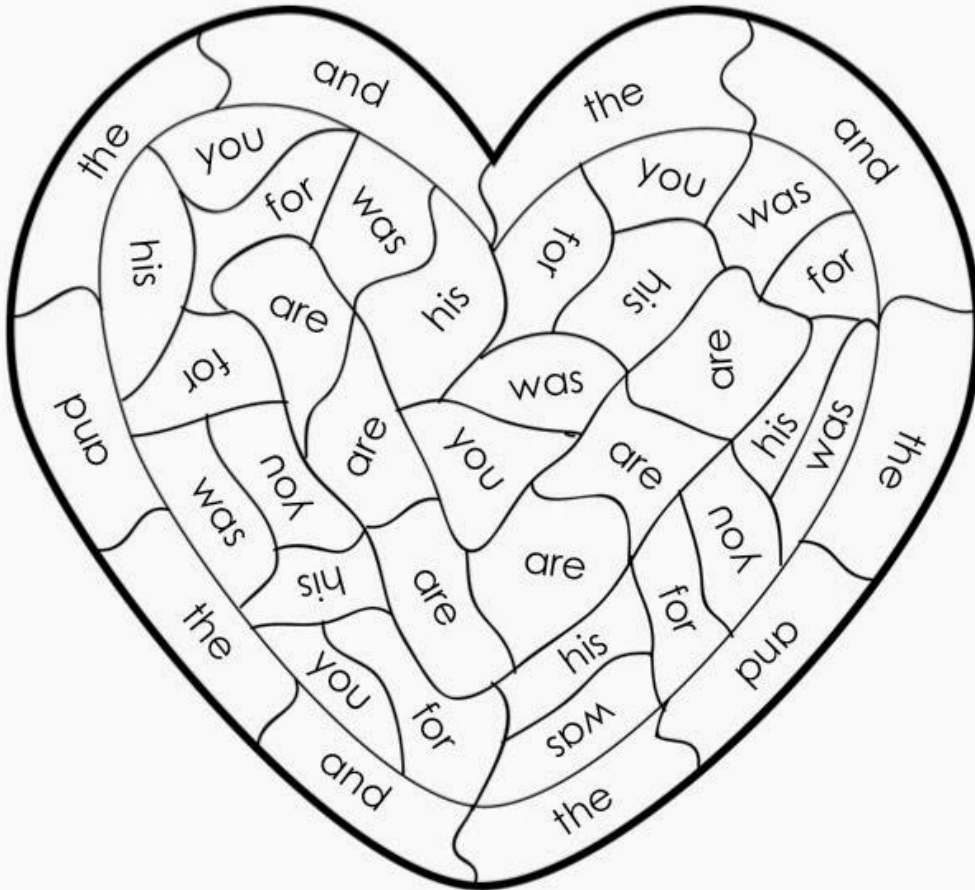
Prayers For

Prayers for Wayne, Judy, Frank, Chris, Gary, James & Family, Gina, Michael, Trudy, Kathy, Rosemary, Nancy, Be, Sharon, Melanie, Don, Families of St. John & St. James

Kid's Page

Name: _____

COLOR MY VALENTINE!



Find each word in the heart and color the space using the key below.

you: purple
and: light blue
the: dark blue

for: yellow
was: orange

his: green
are: pink

Valentine Day Poem



LOVE IS IMPORTANT

Love is so important
in everything we do.
Love brings out the very best
in every point of view.

It's easier to be loving
than to hold on to a grudge.
We get stuck in negativity
and our ego will not budge!

Experiences, good and bad,
will always come and go,
being able to love regardless
is how our spirits grow.

Love works in mysterious ways
to soften any concern.
Giving love away freely
reaps loving rewards in return.

How wonderful and magical
we feel when we're in love.
We truly are on top of our world -
there's nothing we can't rise above!

Let's turn all negative thinking
into positive, loving thought
by spreading love, joy and peace
as, for thousands of years, we've been taught.

Jean Kay
Poems on Request
poetrytoinspire.com

Meeting Minutes / Reports

St. John's United Church of Christ
December 11, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 6:40 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Ken

Council Members Present: Georgia Phelan, Carolyn Hosford, Miriam Guyor, Pastor Ken

Absent: Don Weichert, Katie Phelan, Linda Girard, Shari Faucher

November 13, 2023, Minutes: Motion to accept minutes as presented by Carolyn, second by Georgia. Carried.

Calendar updates: January 7 (Epiphany service) and 21: Communion services

January 8: Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.

January 14 and 21: Service with Sunday School

January 20: Fellowship Hall rental, baby shower at noon

January 21: Annual Meeting following service

Ministry Reports

Worship No report

Fellowship No report

Outreach A. Adopt-a-Family Christmas. Mary Galvin delivered gifts to the school. We will do this cooperatively with St. James in 2024.

Spiritual Growth

A. Sunday School: Made and discussed advent wreaths. No class on Dec. 24.

B. Mary Martha Guild: Christmas Luncheon was held on December 14.

C. Lenten Discussion Group: How to be a Better Christian. Date to be announced.

Earthly Gifts

A. Treasurer's Report: Miriam made the motion to approve. Second by Carolyn. Carried.

B. 2024 Budget Committee. Ken hopes to have the budget ready for Jan. 8 council meeting.

Building and Grounds: Gutters have been cleaned out by the Galvin Family.

Annual Meeting: Held on Jan. 21 following service with a potluck. Georgia will be collecting reports.

Records/History Book: No report.

Pastor's Report: Most covered above. Pastoral care is ongoing, numerous funerals.

New Business: Christmas gifts: \$750 budgeted. Foxfire Fixin's fundraiser will be discussed in Jan.

Unfinished Business

A. Kurt and Georgia are working on a 2 X 4 foot St. John's sign at M29/River Rd.

B. UCC Support funds: Basic Support, "Join the Movement" racial justice fund and Veterans of the Cross Retirement Fund will be considered in the 2024 budget.

Correspondence - none

Adjournment: Carolyn made the motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Second by Georgia. Carried.

Closing prayer: Pastor Ken

Next meeting is January 8, 2024

The Mary Martha Guild Christmas Luncheon

Martha Mary Minutes from the meeting held on December 14, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 1:35pm by Loretta.

Members present: Loretta, Lois, Carolyn, Bea and Lynn.

Minutes from the October meeting were read. Motion by Carolyn, seconded by Bea, to accept as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report - The balance in our checking account as of November 30 is \$3,536.97. Motion made by Bea, seconded by Carolyn to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business - We will raffle off the Railroad quilt at the Rummage sale in the spring. Further discussion will be held at that time. Our Certificate of Deposit (CD) at Huntington Bank will mature in January. We tabled further discussion regarding that until January.

New Business - Motion made by Bea, seconded by Lynn, to change our meeting day from the second Wednesday, back to the second Thursday of each month. Motion carried. There were 13 people at our Christmas Dinner. \$150 freewill offering was collected, which will be used to purchase groceries for a family in need for their Christmas dinner. Motion made by Lynn, seconded by Bea to send donations of \$650. each to A New Dawn, Downriver Helping Hands, The Salvation Army, The United Church of Christ (national office in Cleveland, Ohio) and the MC Old Newsboys. Motion carried.

Motion made by Lynn, seconded by Carolyn, to adjourn the meeting at 2:15pm. Carried.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

February Activities

Saturday, February 3 – Euchre at St. James – 6:30pm.

Sunday, February 4 - Sunday Worship with Communion - 11 am

Thursday, February 8 – The Prayer Group will meet at 11am. In the fellowship room

Thursday, February 8 – Mary Martha Guild will meet at 12 noon in the fellowship room. Lois Weichert will be our hostess.

Sunday, February 11 – Sunday Worship – 11am

Monday, February 12 – Council Meeting – 6:30pm.

Wednesday, February 14 – The Prayer Group - 11:30 am in the Fellowship Room

Ash Wednesday

Valentin's Day

Saturday, February 17 – Euchre at St. James – 6:30pm

Sunday, February 18 – Sunday Worship with Communion and Sunday School - 11am

???????????????????? - Fund raiser dinner at Murphy Inn

Wednesday, February 21 – Lenton discussion group on How to Live a Better Christian Life
– Zoom at 7pm

Sunday, February 25 - Sunday Worship - 11 am

Wednesday, February 28 – Lenton discussion group on How to Live a Better Christian Life
– Zoom at 7pm

March Activities

Wednesday, March 6 – Lenton discussion group on How to Live a Better Christian Life
– Zoom at 7pm

Wednesday, March 13 – Lenton discussion group on How to Live a Better Christian Life
– Zoom at 7pm

Giving Lasts All Year!

St. John's & St. James' Christmas Charity Tote Bags: Some needed items:

We are starting over again for the next year. The tote bags are for both boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 14. The items accepted anytime: hygiene items such as: toothbrush holders, toothbrushes, toothpaste, washcloths, dental floss, comb/brushes, hair accessories such as head bands, ponytails, clips, bows, and barrettes and school supplies such as: notebooks, crayons, colored pencils, colored markers, pencil sharpeners, scissors (for youngsters and older children), rulers, large erasers. Pens, pencils and socks, hats, scarves and gloves/mittens and toys.

Please donate travel size items, we only have so much space to store the items in for the year and we need to get all items to fit in the bags. Please try to **stick to the list** so we receive enough of the items we need and not a little of items that are considered extra items.

Thank you!!!

Donations accepted all year to accumulate 100 of each item.
distribution is via local organizations. Donation box & COMPLETE LIST on table.

Scripture Readings for February

Sunday, February 4
Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

Isa 40: 21-31
Ps 147: 1-11, 20c
1 Cor 0: 16-23
Mark 1: 29-39

Source of Strength

Sunday, February 18
First Sunday in Lent

Gen 9: 8-17
Ps 25 : 1-10
1 Peter 3: 18-22
Mark 1: 9-15

God's Loving Paths

Sunday, February 11
Transfiguration

2 Kings 2: 1-12
Ps 50: 1-6
2 Cor 4: 3-6
Mark 9: 2-9

Compassionate Community

Sunday, February 25
Second Sunday in Lent

Gen 17 : 1-7, 15-16
Ps 22 : 23-31
Rom 4 : 13-25
Mark 8: 31-38 or Mark 9: 2-9

Always Close

Additional Activities

Sunday Services

Sunday Service is held at 11:00 a.m. each week. This service is also available live via online streaming at 11:00 a.m. St. James' service is streamed at 9:00 a.m. Both are available to view as a video any time after the live streams. www.facebook.com/Stjohnsuccmarinecity or www.facebook.com/St.James-United-Church-of-Christ-10150090210425008

Council Meetings

The Church Council's next meeting is February 12th at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room.

Sunday School

Sunday School is held the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Students are encouraged to attend services on the first and third Sundays as well. Lynn Andrews and Miriam Guyor are teachers this year.

Mary Martha Guild

Mary Martha Guild meets the second Wednesday of each month at noon in the Community Room.

Coffee Donations

There is a container on the counter by the coffee pots for freewill donations to help pay for the cost of Coffee Hour. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Prayer Group

Prayer Group meets the second Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. in the Community Room. We will be praying for our family and friends. Anyone is welcome to join us. Please let us know if you have any prayer needs.

Coffee Hour

Although we gather for coffee, visiting and goodies each Sunday after service, we have a special Coffee Hour the first Sunday of each month when special food is prepared and shared. This is provided by members. To take a turn to host, please sign up in the Community Room.

Hundreds of older and disabled neighbors in our community need help getting to doctor appointments, the grocery store or other essential errands. Being able to get food and medical care can make it possible for them to remain in their homes as long as possible. The **Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers** program is in need of drivers who are available during daytime hours. If you have just a couple hours a month that you can give to someone in need, you can make a huge difference in the life of a struggling neighbor. You tell us what days, times and areas are convenient for you and we call you with specific appointments that meet your criteria. If you are free, say yes. If you're not, simply decline and we will call you another time. Even one more ride a year makes a big difference to the person who needs it! Please call our office today at (586) 757-5551. Learn more at www.ivcinfo.org

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FEBRUARY
NEWSLETTER