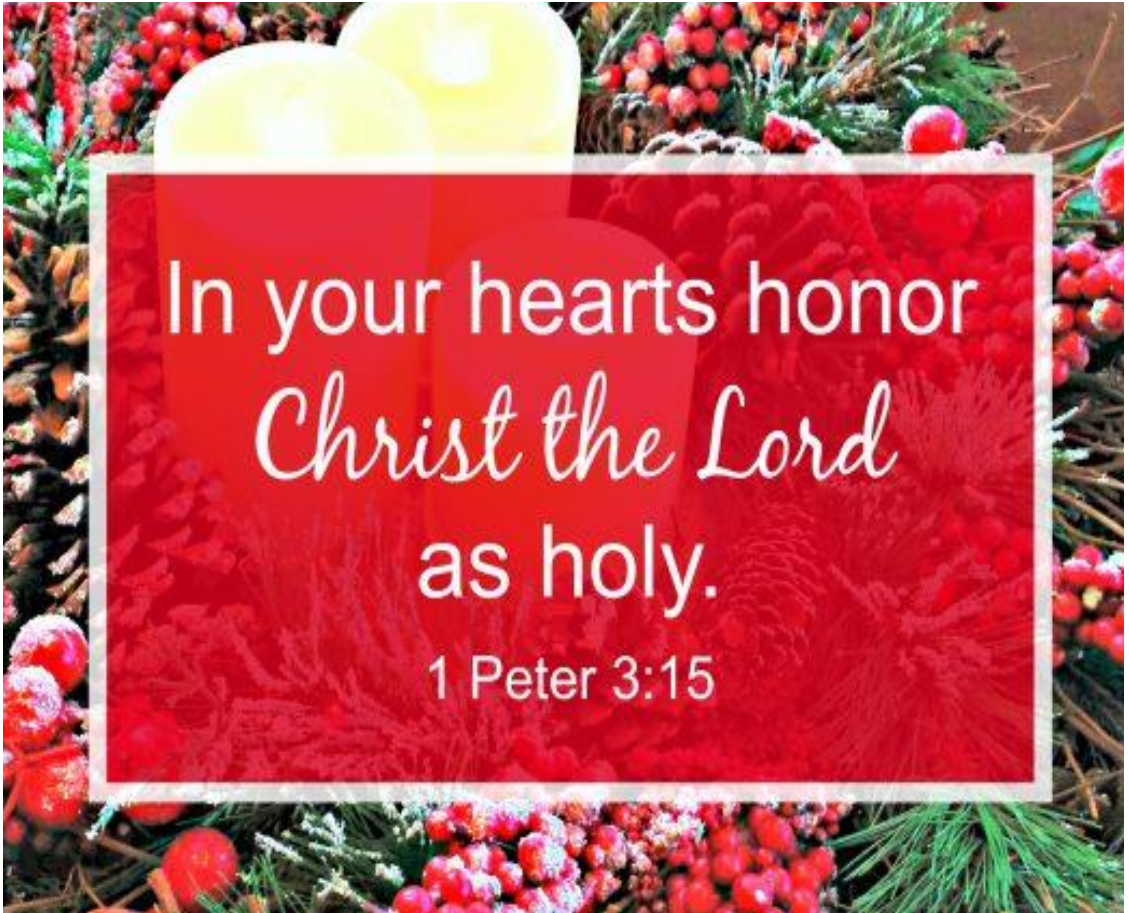


The Spirit

Volume 76 No 12 December 2023



**A publication of St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania**

From Pastor Caroline

I do most of my grocery shopping at Aldi (they have the best fresh produce prices around). It's always fun to wander the aisles, seeing the specialty and seasonal items they carry. For instance, they have an extensive variety of Advent calendars: coffee, chocolate, cheese, even hot sauce. The ones for kids include Lego, Mini Brands, Pokémon, and Paw Patrol. They even have a version for dogs (unfortunately, they do not have a comparable one for cats).

I loved Advent calendars as a child, the anticipation of finding and opening each day's little window, savoring the small piece of chocolate inside. There was always the temptation to rush, to hurry through and "collect all the prizes." Yet there was something sacred about the waiting, not rushing ahead but savoring each day of the Advent season.

We celebrate the season of Advent to help us get ready to welcome Christ into our lives and into our hearts, to make room for the new thing that God is doing. We take time to prepare. With hope, peace, love, and joy, we find our way forward, knowing that God is with us.

December is often a busy month, filled with holiday parties, family gatherings, buying and wrapping presents, decorating trees, baking cookies, and more. Here at St. John's, we have the Cookie Walk on December 2, caroling on December 3, Bell Fest on December 10, and more. The four Sundays of Advent remind us of the light of Christ coming into the world, getting ever-brighter the closer we get to Christmas. Christ is the light that shines in the darkness, a light that cannot be overcome.

Please note: we will have worship at 10 am on Christmas Eve, marking the Fourth Sunday of Advent. There will be two Christmas Eve services: one at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall and one at 7 pm in the Sanctuary (musical prelude will begin at 6:45 pm). These candlelight services are an opportunity to witness to the light of Christ and to take that light back out into the world.

I know that this holiday season can be hard, as well as holy. A community "Blue Christmas" service will be held on Thursday, December 21, 7pm at Calvary United Methodist Church. I'm grateful for the ecumenical efforts in our area that make services like this one possible.

I'm living through a season of "firsts" myself: first birthday, first Thanksgiving, and now first Christmas without my dad. Some days are better than others. Many days are still hard. I give thanks for his life and his presence in mine. I'm doing my best to honor his legacy and the lessons he taught me. As our choir anthem from November 19 (Mark Miller's "I Choose Love") reminded me, "in the midst of pain, I choose love." Each and every day, I choose love.

Copies of our Future Together Strategic Plan are available in the Narthex, at the Welcome Center, and by request from the church office. Won't you join us in implementing this important work? With hope and peace, love and joy, may we say "yes" to the opportunities and possibilities for spiritual deepening, energizing participation, community engagement, congregational care, and financial sustainability as we grow in love of God and neighbor.

Let us wait. Let us watch. Let us ready ourselves to rejoice, for we hold one another in love and we hold one another in prayer. Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Peace, Pastor Caroline



Special Offering Reminder
Please submit by Sunday, Dec. 10

It is the tradition at St. John's to have a special offering envelope designated for Christmas Gifts for Church Staff. They are a true blessing to our Church! To take part in this, please bring your envelope to the Church office.

Write "STAFF Christmas Gift"
in the memo line of your check.



St John's Nursery School

Merry Christmas!

Our Nursery School children and staff are so excited to celebrate the Christmas season! This month, we will have a fun-filled Polar Express movie day with themed crafts, snacks, and activities. We will then end our year with class Christmas parties and a special visit from St. Nick!

Thank you for your continued support of the Nursery School. Our Butcher Shoppe fundraiser was a success again this year! Friendly reminder that cookie dough and coffee orders may be picked up starting Wednesday, December 6th at noon. Orders will be labeled and placed in the Parlor refrigerator.

We also appreciate your contributions to our Pajama Drive. The response so far has been exciting! We look forward to delivering a trunk full of pajamas and storybooks to Little Daisy's Closet. Pajamas can be donated through December 5th.

On behalf of the Nursery School Ministry and Staff, we would like to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Kari Rock, Director

First Fruits of December

Our first Fruits for December is the Angel tree. Please consider brightening Christmas morning for kids right here in Franklin County!

Every child deserves to experience the joy of Christmas morning. The Salvation Army Angel Tree program helps provide Christmas gifts for hundreds of thousands of children around the country each year. Once a child or senior adult has been registered and accepted as an Angel their Christmas wish list is shared with donors in your community who purchase gifts of new clothing and toys. The gifts are distributed to the family to place under their family Christmas tree.

The gift tags are on the tree and the gifts should be brought to St. John's for dedication by Sunday, December 3rd.



COOKIE WALK

Saturday Dec. 2, 2023

9 am - 12 pm

Fellowship Hall

Purchase delicious
homemade cookies
for the holidays
at \$9.50/lb.

Proceeds to benefit homeless children
in the Chambersburg Area School District.

St. John's United Church of Christ
1811 Lincoln Way E., Chambersburg PA
Use Parking Lot B



COOKIE WALK

Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023

9 am - 12 pm

Fellowship Hall

Bake your favorite holiday cookies
& share the recipe for a great cause.
Provide 8-10 dozen of each cookie.

SIGN UP IN THE LOBBY

Proceeds to benefit homeless children
in the Chambersburg Area School District

St. John's United Church of Christ
1811 Lincoln Way E., Chambersburg PA
Use Parking Lot B





CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary for the Christmas Eve Service.

If you would like to donate a poinsettia, please complete the form and return it to the church office by **Monday, December 4, 2023. Cost - \$15.00 each**

Donor's name: _____

(as it will appear in the bulletin insert)

I would like to order _____ poinsettias to be placed:

_____ In memory of: _____

_____ In honor of: _____

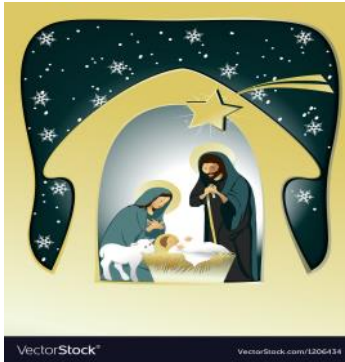
_____ To the Glory of God

****Thank you for your support. Please arrange for your flowers to be picked up.**

Please include your payment with this form and return it to the church office by **Monday, December 4, 2023. Make checks payable to St. John's UCC.**



Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9am –3pm



The church office will be closed Monday, December 25 and Tuesday, December 26 for the Christmas Holiday.

We will also be closed on Monday, January 1, for New Years.

We are still in need of office volunteers! Please contact Loretta if you are interested and can help.

Loretta Zimmerman - Office Manager

Heather Nickey - Office Assistant

DECEMBER 18, 2023 | 6:30 PM

BIBLE & A BEER

Theological conversations
Rich discussion
Powerful testimony

Join us at 6:30 pm at
The Trojan Diner & Sports Bar!
1121 Lincoln Way E
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Bring your questions,
Invite your friends!



Join us for

Saturday Night Worship

This service is designed to provide a relaxed, informal, intimate atmosphere for worship and fellowship.

This family-friendly worship service includes communion and activities for children.



December 9, 2023

5:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

St. John's UCC 1811 LWE Chambersburg, PA 17202



**St. John's
United Church of Christ**
December 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm
in St. John's Sanctuary

Chambers Bell Fest

**Concert includes handbell choirs from:
Falling Spring Presbyterian Church
First Lutheran Church
Park Avenue Methodist Church
St. John's United Church of Christ**

St. John's United Church of Christ, 1811 Lincoln Way E., Chambersburg PA, Parking Lot A



MUSIC MINISTRY

In The News:

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the first use of the hymn “Faith’s Review and Expectation,” better known today by the name, “Amazing Grace.” Millions of people around the world know the song, written by atheistic-ex-human trafficker-turned Christian cleric and abolitionist John Newton (1725-1807)

Newton, son of a sea captain who was away from home for extended periods of time and a devout woman who died just before Newton turned 7. The boy embarked on his first voyage with his father at the age of 10. His childhood trauma no doubt contributed to his immorality and self-indulgence during his youth, when he was given to drinking, gambling, profanity and mockery of those who held Christian beliefs.

Later he was put on a slave ship headed to West Africa, where he was handed over to Amos Clow, a slave trader, in 1745. Clow enslaved him and gave him to his African wife, Princess Pey Ey, who would abuse and starve him, and withheld medical care from him after he contracted malaria. Clow also put him in irons at times. In 1748, Newton was rescued by a sea captain Newton’s father had asked to search for him.

Like millions of people at the time, many saw no contradiction in their faith and their behavior towards Africans. Newton didn't immediately see any conflict between his new beliefs and his employment as a captain of slave ships. As his faith matured, Newton repented of his involvement in the slave trade. He wrote, “I think I should have quit sooner had I considered it as I now do to be unlawful and wrong.” Eventually Newton became a minister in the Church of England.

For 22 years, Newton mentored William Wilberforce, who led the campaign in Parliament to abolish the African slave trade. Newton sent copies of his pamphlet, “Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade,” describing the horrific conditions of the slave ships, to every member of the legislature. He wrote: “I hope it will always be a subject of humiliation reflection to me... that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders.”

Just before Newton’s death in 1807, the Slave Trade Act was enacted, ending the English government’s participation in the slave trade.

Newton’s epitaph inscribed on his tombstone:

John Newton, Clerk
Once an infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa,
Was, by the mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Preserved, restored, pardoned,
And appointed to preach the Faith
He had long labored to destroy.

THE CARING CORNER

Update on our Prayer Shawl Ministry

A group of knitters and crocheters have been making prayer shawls for the church to give as gifts of comfort or celebration for about fifteen (15) years. Nearly 300 have been given to members and friends of the congregation. The shawls have been created at no cost to the church—time and materials are donated by the creator. We are thankful to this group for their time and devotion to this ministry.

Shawls that have been blessed are available for any member to pick up and give to an individual, along with a prayer card. We do keep a record of prayer shawl recipients therefore the office should be notified when one has been given.

We hope those individuals who have been providing shawls will continue to do so, and that other people will also volunteer to knit or crochet shawls.

About the prayer shawl dimensions and colors: Colors are up to the donor. Shawls have been made in a wide variety of colors and patterns and each one is beautiful. In order that the shawl will be used by the recipient comfortably, shawls should be 18 to 22 inches wide and at least 54 inches long. A sample with suggested pattern can be found in the prayer shawl drawer outside of the office.

**Again, I am grateful for the devotion of those people who have been providing shawls through all these years. Thank you,
Nina Widmann**

Addendum to Nina's message: We are please to announce that Aaron Hartman has volunteered to co-chair this ministry. Aaron is also available to answer questions about this much loved and appreciated ministry.



St. John's t-shirts and hoodies for sale!

St. John's U.C.C Shirts!!

T-Shirts - \$12 each
Hoodies - \$25 Each
Sizes: Small - 2 XL



**Visit the office to
get yours today!**

1811 Lincoln Way East
Chambersburg, PA 17202
(717) 263 - 8593

Ladies LUNCHEON

Our group of nine ladies had the side porch to ourselves as we met on Wednesday, November 8, at Windy Knoll. As someone remarked, “If we judge by the noise level it has been a successful meeting.”

Thanksgiving was the topic of discussion and the basis of prayer.

We will enjoy our Christmas get-together in The Grille at Menno Haven. The cost will be \$15 - \$18 as we will be using the buffet luncheon set up for the day. Hope to see YOU on Wednesday, December 13 at 11:30.

MENS BREAKFAST



We will be meeting Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 7am at Chris's Kitchen (across from Perkins)

We look forward to seeing any and all for January's Breakfast

December BIRTHDAYS

12/03 Jeanne Welch
12/04 Robert Lewis
12/04 Stephanie Brown
12/05 Mary Moyer
12/05 Chani Wolfe
12/08 Judith Patterson
12/09 Virginia McCright
12/13 Mary (Alison) Hopper
12/14 Peter A'zary
12/16 Judy Knepper
12/17 Olivia Myers
12/20 Roberta Peters
12/21 Bernice Tosten
12/22 Gloria Crum
12/23 MaryLee Yaukey
12/23 Kathleen Mooshian
12/25 Beth Johnson
12/26 Holly Hoover
12/27 Connie Evans
12/29 Mark Hoger
12/30 Randall Kegerreis
12/31 Sue Sprenger
12/31 Jared Leister





December Youth News

Calendar of Events

3 Church School 8:45

Confirmation after worship

Family Caroling 2PM

10 Church School 8:45

Children's Corner during worship

17 Church School Party 8:45 Youth room

(Godly Play will start in their classroom, pick up in the Youth room)

23 Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal 9:30

Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal 11:00

24 No Church School

Children's Corner during worship

Christmas Eve Pageant 4:30

Christmas Eve Pageant 6:30

31 Church School 8:45

Angel Tree Shopping

The Youth and their families are again offering to shop for anyone who would like to pull an Angel Tree name but cannot shop themselves. Contact Roxanne Davenport or the church office if you are interested in arranging a personal shopper for your angel, or are a family interested in helping!



The Youth and their families will be spreading Christmas Cheer again this year through song as we plan to travel around to our shut-in church family members. This is open to anyone who like to join us!! Working with Called to Care, we will visit and sing on December 3rd leaving the church at 2:00. We will end back at the church around 5:00 to share in a covered dish social. RSVP to Roxanne



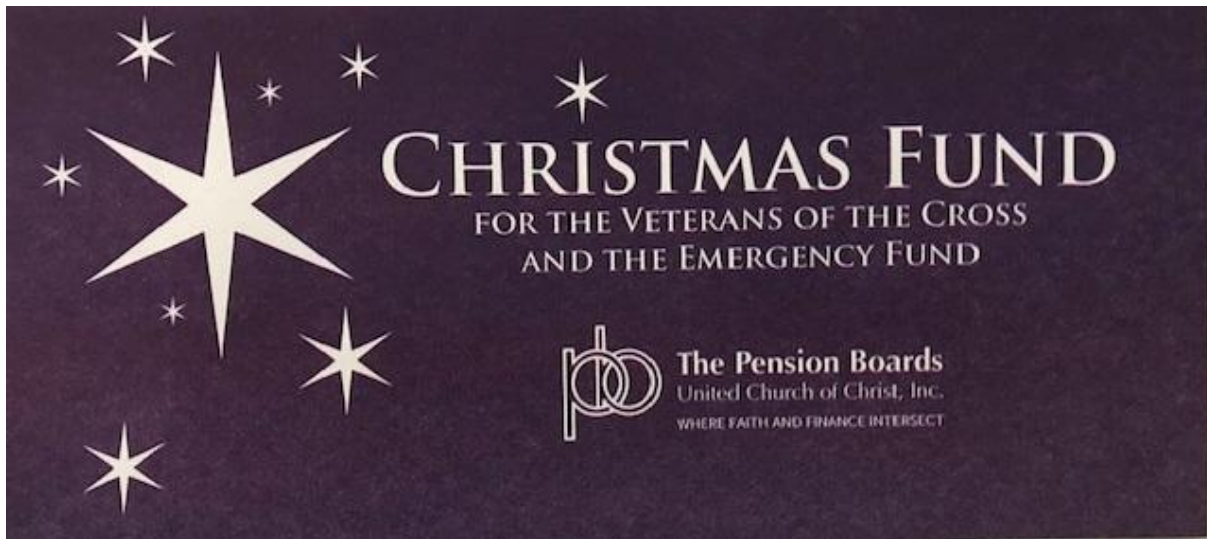
[This Photo](#) by Un-

Silent Night... Holy Night

The story and characters are the same, but the actors change!

Again, this year, there will be two Christmas Eve Services. An earlier Contemporary Family service in Fellowship Hall at 5:00 and a Traditional Service at 7:00 in the Sanctuary. We will portray the story again at one or both services, depending on the interest. Actors are needed (older youth and maybe some adults may be asked to shadow, in costume, our newer younger children) so look for the sign up on the Youth Bulletin Board or see Roxanne.

Rehearsal will be the 23rd at 9:30 and 11:00 respectively in those locations. Costuming will be done after rehearsal and parents are asked to help with any aspects where needed.



The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross-and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks. This special offering will be received December 3, 10, 17 and 24. Please designate "Christmas Fund" in the memo line on your checks.



Bad weather could be upon us at any time.

Remember that the church follows the CASD schedule. If school is cancelled for the day, all church activities are cancelled for the day. If school is delayed in the morning, all morning church activities are cancelled. If school is dismissed early, all evening church activities will be cancelled. It is the goal to hold all scheduled worship services.

When in doubt, safety first!

Ministry Chairs

2023-2024

Called to Care—*Connie Morrill-Hair*

Camp—*MaryLee Yaukey*

Caring Cooks—*Lisa Frantz*

Children & Youth Ministry—*Roxanne Davenport*

Facilities Ministry—*Tom Harrison*

Fellowship—*Sue McMurtray*

Finance—*Scot Orndorff*

Invitational Ministry—*Susan Collier*

Library—*MaryLee Yaukey*

Nursery School—*Renee Byers*

Open and Affirming— *TBD*

Outreach—*TBD*

Prayer Shawl Ministry — *Nina Widmann*

Public Relations— *TBD– Suggestions/ Volunteers Welcome!*

Safe Church Compliance—Safe Church Compliance Steward, *Sarah Herbert*

Safe Church Response—Safe Church Compliance Steward, *Sarah Herbert*

Safety and Security—*Tom Kinton*

Technology and Media Ministry— *Calvin Frantz*

Worship/Music Ministry—*Gary Crum* 22

Want to serve
on a Ministry?

These Ministry teams
would welcome you &
your talents!

Speak to them or Pastor
Caroline today to be a part
of these ministries.

CONSISTORY 2023-2024

Trustees

TBD

Thomas Harrison—**Vice President**

Larry Wadel

Elders

Harold Collier, **President**

N. Aaron Hartman

Jill Miller

Gary Patterson

Dwight Sollenberger

Carol Yarema

Deacons

Allen Frantz

Mike Blumberg

Cathy Kinton

Sarah Myers, **Secretary**

Chris Willman-Bunge

TBD

Pastor

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

Sunday Worship will be at 10 am (Offered In-Person and on YouTube)

Communion Dates 2023/2024

Sunday, December 3, 10 am Sanctuary & Livestreamed

Saturday, December 9, 5 pm Fellowship Hall

Sunday, January 7, 10 am Sanctuary & Livestreamed

Saturday, January 13, 5 pm Fellowship Hall



St. John's United Church of Christ

**1811 Lincoln Way East
Chambersburg, PA 17202**

Phone: 717-263-8593 Fax: 717-263-9010

Website: www.sjucc1811.org