

# The Spirit

Volume 77 No. 1 January 2024



*Wishing you a blessed*

**2024**

*Happy New Year*

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

## *From Pastor Caroline*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I hope you've had a wonderful holiday, welcoming Jesus into our hearts, lives and world. Do you set intentions or set resolutions each year?

I personally prefer intentions as opposed to resolutions. Either way, grace is a necessary part of how we live each and every day. Over the last several years, I have chosen a "word of the year" to help guide my heart, mind, and actions. These words have included pivot (2020), patience (2021), and passion (2023). I've been thinking of other appropriate words that begin with "p" (in case you couldn't tell, I like a good theme) and have been prayerfully considering what word might be most appropriate for 2024. Finally, my word came: pilot.

What does it mean to pilot something? As an adjective, this means to experiment with or test something to see how it works. The concept of "piloting" works really well with our strategic plan, as we put ideas into practice and see if we're on the right track.

The other beauty of experimenting or testing something (piloting) is that we're not tied to that idea long-term. It is an opportunity to try something for a season and see how it goes. Sometimes, those are the ideas that we say "well, at least we tried" and other times, those are the ideas that transform our ministry and our lives.

I'm excited about opportunities to practice piloting ideas, ones that we've already identified and those yet to be considered. Piloting allows for flexibility and adaptability, two things I know we learned during the pandemic are critical for being "the church of the future."

Throughout this issue of the Spirit, you'll see new features—things we are trying to share information, connect with one another, and show progress in implementing our Future Together Strategic Plan. These include a "member spotlight" page to help us get to know one another; articles on various financial topics (this month focuses on "what is financial sustainability"); and a "here's where we are" page tracking actions from our strategic plan.

Copies of our Future Together Strategic Plan are available in the Narthex, at the Welcome Center, and by request from the church office. Please pick one up and review the goals in spiritual deepening, energizing participation, community engagement, congregational care, and financial sustainability.

We know from experience (and scripture) that we cannot over-communicate. We want **you** to know what is happening at St. John's UCC, to be excited about the possibilities, and to find ways to get involved. Ephesians 4:12 reminds us to "equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ."

May we continue to discern the ways in which God is calling us to love and learn, worship and witness, welcome and serve, especially now as we enter into a new year.

Let us rejoice in all that lies ahead of us, giving thanks to God for our blessings and the opportunities and possibilities we have to grow<sup>2</sup> in love of God and neighbor.

*Peace, Pastor Caroline*



# MUSIC MINISTRY

## **How Handbell Ringing came to the United States**

The Peak Family Ringers probably introduced handbell ringing in the United States in the 1830s. They are known to have given concerts in the eastern US and probably predated the Lancashire Ringers whom P. T. Barnum brought from England.

According to an article published in the New York Times on Feb. 22, 1885, Mr. and Mrs. William Peak were at that time in the Cortland County Poorhouse near Homer, N.Y. Mrs. Peak stated that she and her husband had heard Barnum's Lancashire Ringers in Eastport, Maine in about 1845. Mrs. Peak also said that the "Swiss People were anxious to return home, because the climate had proved fatal to two of their numbers." Peak bought them out. "After three months' practice," said Mrs. Peak, "William Peak had made himself master of the bell ringing art and had also instructed the other members of our family. On our public appearance, triumph after triumph followed in quick succession."

Phineas T. Barnum was a circus owner, an entrepreneur, and a great showman. While in Liverpool, England, he heard a prize-winning, tune-ringing handbell "band" called the Lancashire Ringers and he arranged to bring them to the United States for a concert tour in the 1840s. Being a showman, he decided to dress them in Swiss Alpine costumes and call them "Swiss Bell Ringers". The Englishmen spoke nothing but English, so it was suggested that they not speak in public. However, Barnum said that if they spoke in their native Lancashire dialect, no one would know that they were speaking English! Because this group of "Swiss" ringers was so successful, Americans often mistakenly think that handbell ringing came to the United States from Switzerland instead of from England.

In 1850, in the tower of Christ Church, Philadelphia, the Lancashire Ringers rang the first complete peal heard in the United States.

-Gary Crum



# St John's Nursery School

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season has come and gone and we at St. John's Nursery School look forward to the new beginnings that 2024 will bring.

December was quite an exciting month. The children were busy little elves making holiday gifts for their families and friends. The classrooms celebrated with a Christmas party with crafts and games, complete with a visit from Santa! We also had a Polar Express day where the children enjoyed chocolate milk, Christmas pretzels, and 'snowballs' while lounging in their pajamas. A special thank you to our Santa and Mrs. Claus, Larry & Vonnie Wadel, for taking time out of their busy schedules to help us with our celebrations.

With your help, St. John's Nursery School was able to donate 162 pairs of pajamas and books to Little Daisy's Closet this year. What a wonderful, giving heart our Nursery School families and church members have!

We are pleased to continue our guest reader program this year, where members of the church come read a book to our children. Please see Linda Zeger if you are interested in being a part of this program. Our children love having special visitors read to them!

On behalf of the Nursery School Staff I would like to send a special Thank You to our Nursery School Ministry members for your continuous support and for the amazing Christmas Breakfast and gift! We are blessed with such a loving and knowledgeable board that supports our mission here at St. John's Nursery School!

Happy New Year to all of our friends, family members, and supporters of St. John's Nursery School. May 2024 bring you peace, love, and memories that make you smile.

# *Member Spotlight!*

Hi, I am Neath (she/her) (pronounced Knee-it), and I'm from Cambodia. I moved to Chambersburg this past June. My interests include indulging in good food, restful sleep, and solving puzzles. However, lately, I've been spending my free time playing the guitar and doing laundry. Although I'm still learning the art of doing laundry, I've mastered the technique of only using bleach for whites.

Hi! My name is Heidi, (she/her) pronounced "Hey-Dee." I'm a Chambersburg native who returned to my hometown last year after spending six years in Cambodia. During my time in Cambodia, I served as a missionary and met my wife, Neath (pronounced "Knee-it"). Currently, I work in the Human Resources department at Menno Haven. Outside of work, I enjoy expressing my creativity through various mediums, ranging from traditional ones like watercolor and acrylics to modern ones like digital illustrations and typography.



# Future Together Progress Report

Although only weeks after our November 19 congregational meeting, there is much progress on our work together into the future.

You will note that several of these activities overlap in different areas of our Strategic Plan. We hope this “progress report” helps everyone to see how we are living into our St. John’s UCC Future Together Strategic Plan.

## **SPIRITUAL DEEPENING**

- ◆ Adding to the weekly Yoga classes, room 202 was used for a craft night project. Spring 2024 events are being planned.
- ◆ The Network Ministry’s Step Team was active in our worship service as we continue to partner with this group supporting youth in our area.
- ◆ A Lenten devotion/reflection booklet is planned for Lent in 2024.
- ◆ The prayer chain is advertised weekly and coordinated by the office staff. We continue to pray with and for one another.

## **ENERGIZE PARTICIPATION**

- ◆ Lynda Pound is now coordinating the coffee hour hosts.
- ◆ A task force has met and is making progress on reviewing the governance and leadership teams needed to succeed in reaching our goals. Our hope is to have a presentation ready for the congregational meeting in June 2024.
- ◆ A retreat called Net Engagement facilitated by Jose Ricardo-Osorio is being planned for the Spring. Stay tuned for more details!

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

- ◆ Our library (located in room 106) is now hosting a jigsaw puzzle exchange: take one or trade one and enjoy a relaxing time.
- ◆ Our youth and several adults went caroling to several of the homebound members of our congregation in December.
- ◆ Carol Yarema will lead a book study in January. Contact her for more details.
- ◆ A group study of “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren is being planned.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- ◆ Our annual Cookie Walk on December 2 was very successful in raising \$600 for homeless youth in the Chambersburg Area School District.
- ◆ Bell Fest on December 10 was well attended and an inspiration for everyone.
- ◆ Upcoming events in January and early February offer opportunities for community engagement and outreach.
- ◆ On January 19, there will be a “Banquet for a New Year” fundraiser hosted by Joshua Gibson who leads the cooking classes at our church.
- ◆ On January 28, John Widmann will offer an organ recital in the Sanctuary.
- ◆ On February 2, Jose Ricardo-Osorio will be leading a salsa/ merengue class.
- ◆ February 13 is our annual Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner before Ash Wednesday on February 14.
- ◆ St. John’s will host the Salvation Army Auxiliary Fabric Fair in May 2024.

## **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILTY**

- ◆ A newly formed Camp task force has met and is looking at using our camp in more ways in 2024. Camp Ministry is reviewing rental usage and fees.
- ◆ St. John’s has engaged Berkstresser Realty to assist in marketing our unused or underutilized space for room rentals.
- ◆ To assist us in applying for grants, St. John’s has engaged Ghost Writer LLC to work on helping us navigate the grant-writing process and secure outside funding for particular projects.
- ◆ Online giving and other giving opportunities are regularly advertised.

# What is Financial Sustainability?

As a church, we aren't good at talking about money. We never really have been. When we do, the conversations are awkward and the sermons are uncomfortable. It is generally an unpleasant experience. It is also inevitable.

The unfortunate truth is that the church as we know it cannot stand without money. Money pays staff salaries and keeps a roof over our worship space. Money funds our operations and provides a means to live into the mission of our church. Money is the key to financial sustainability, but what is that really?

The simple explanation is that financial sustainability is a long-range plan that allows the church to sustain itself so that it is able to support its purpose. In simpler terms, it means that we have enough money to cover all our expenses, expected or not. Much like a household budget, being financially sustainable means that we planned well for our future needs and wants.

St. John's recently passed a deficit budget for 2024. The good news is we created an ambitious plan to be present in our community while still caring for our congregation, our staff, and our building. The bad news is we will have to dig into our rainy-day funds to do it. Deficit budgets are typically a sign of poor financial health. An unbalanced financial plan cannot be sustained over a long period of time or the savings dry up and we become tasked with finding creative ways to either cut expenses or raise additional income. St. John's is currently working on both.

Our newly adopted Future Together Strategic Plan outlines a series of opportunities for St. John's to support our wider community and promote congregational care. These opportunities, our visions, come with expenses that cannot be supported long-term by an unbalanced budget. It is not financially sustainable. Since mission is tied to the budget, we may be forced to make choices that we don't want to make by abandoning our wants to focus solely on our needs.

The new year is a time for new perspective and quite often, resolution. Motivation for bettering ourselves and our church is fueled by reflections on the past and dreams for our future. St. John's has big dreams. St. John's has a purpose and a mission. It is our responsibility, as a whole church, to support our mission in every way necessary and to sustain that support, financially and otherwise, for a long time going forward.

-The Financial Sustainability Task Force (Scot Orndorff, Jerry Thomason, Lisa Fair and Pastor Caroline)





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



We will be closed on Monday, January 1, for New Year's Day & Monday, January 15, 2024 for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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

Church office # (717) 263-8593

# AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ‘COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT’

As part of our “Future Together Strategic Plan” adopted at the congregation meeting in November, you may notice that one of the areas of focus is “Community Engagement.” As in several past years, again in January 2024, we have an opportunity to start off our new year by participating in an event offering opportunities for ‘volunteering’ to assist with the event or directly engaging in the ‘learning’ and ‘service’ portions of the day.

On Monday, January 15, 2024, this event for MLK Day includes two components: MLK Day of Learning **and** MLK Day of Service.

1) **MLK Day of Learning**, the theme on the ‘learning’ component of the day will be “Living the Dream: It Starts with Me.” You will gather with participants from throughout Franklin County for this free opportunity to dive into principles and issues surrounding diversity, equity, inclusion, community-building, and social cohesion. The day will feature an Adult Track (grades 9 and above) and a Children/Youth Track (grades K-8th) so people of all ages can turn the MLK Day national holiday into a Day of Learning.

The Adult Track will be held from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church. This includes free lunch, general session, a choice of workshops, keynote speaker, entertainment, and more.

The Children/Youth Track will be at Coyle Free Library (where registration begins via adult signature at 10:45 a.m. for drop off), a BYO Lunch at 11 a.m., kid-friendly programming including speakers, sensory activities, scavenger hunts, with this track ending at Central Presbyterian Church at 3:30 p.m.

2) **MLK Day of Service** – is a rewarding way for families, friends, neighbors and colleagues to make a lasting impact on their community in the spirit of Dr. King’s vision of the Beloved Community, Kids under 18 can sign up to volunteer with a parent/guardian/family member. **While this is free, registration is required.**

You can go to the following sites to sign up:

For Day of Learning – go to Franklin County Coalition for Progress (registration will be required to assure planning for lunch for adults and workshop spacing) – [www.fccforprogress.org](http://www.fccforprogress.org)

For Day of Service – go to Racial Reconciliation of Franklin County and register for Service Projects which you will find listed on their site – [www.racialreconciliationfc.org](http://www.racialreconciliationfc.org)

We look forward to St. John’s members and friends supporting these very important ways of becoming further engaged in our community and living into our covenant and strategic planning.



## 2024 WINTER WARMTH DRIVE

A community assessment of Franklin County reveals a high level of poverty and individuals living below the ALICE threshold. The ALICE threshold are individuals and families that earn above the Federal Poverty level, however, do not make enough to afford the basics in the communities where they live. The rates of those at poverty levels and those below the ALICE threshold of Financial Survival for the Chambersburg area and surrounding townships are staggering; and, it is easy as we go about our days, not to be aware of the many needs right before us.

Between January 15 to February 12, we have the opportunity to participate in the Winter Warmth Drive headed up by United Way of Franklin County. Donations and contributions to this drive will help to aid those in poverty, many of whom are housing insecure and/or homeless.

**Beginning on January 15 through February 12, you are invited to bring in tangibles** and place in the boxes at the church:

- ◆ Food – whole grains, seasonings, cooking oils, condiments, flour, sugar, boxed meals, peanut butter, shelf-stable milk, pasta/pasta sauce, and canned goods.
- ◆ Personal Care Items – first aid kits, hand soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, tissues, toothpaste, laundry detergent, dish soap, paper towels, mittens, gloves, winter hats, socks

On **Sunday, February 4, our First Fruits offering** will be an opportunity for you to make monetary donations that will support programs that help provide families with warmth and shelter.

Please join in this effort to continue to create a beloved community wherein we care for one another.



# First Fruit Offering

Having celebrated the birth of Jesus to new-mom Mary, we give thanks for the community support that helps new parents care for their young children.

We have the opportunity to offer support to local families in our community by supporting the Diaper Depot. The Diaper Depot is a ministry of Central Presbyterian Church that distributes disposable diapers and wipes to ~180-200 families each month. They have also offered baby items, breakfast, and some food for families.

We know that 1 in 3 families struggle to provide clean diapers for their babies and toddlers. Your contribution of funds for diapers and wipes can go a long way to support this mission. The Diaper Depot is 100% volunteer based; diapers can be purchased by the organization at a wholesale price, so your donations have a large impact. Donations of physical items are also welcome.

The Outreach Ministry thanks you for your support of the Diaper Depot and families in our community.





Thank you to our St. John's family for the good wishes, prayers and congratulations expressed in the many cards we received for our 70th anniversary. We feel truly blessed to be a part of the St. John's family. With much love and appreciation, Jack and Ginny McCright.

St. John's UCC!

Thank you so much for inviting us to share at your service. We had a blast worshipping with you. May the Lord bless you as you have blessed us. Network 3D Club

JANUARY 15, 2024 | 6:30 PM

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# **BIBLE & A BEER**

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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.*



January 13, 2024

**5:00 pm**

Fellowship Hall

St. John's UCC

1811 LWE Chambersburg, PA 17202



# THE CARING CORNER

## The Caring Corner

Happy New Year! We hope everyone experienced a blessed and safe Christmas. As 2024 begins, let us renew our commitments to love each other and to offer service to others in whatever form we can!

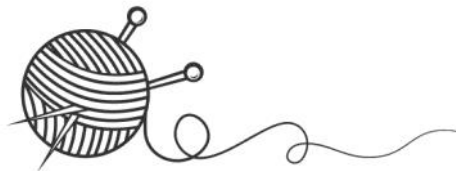
Our flower ministry continues to take care of creating bouquets for our members and friends when Sunday's flowers are made available by their donors. If you are interested in sponsoring flowers for a Sunday Service, please sign up in the lobby—sheet is located on bulletin board next to the office—or contact the church office.

Our visitation ministry continues to keep in touch with homebound folks associated with our church. You would be amazed at the wonderful friendships that develop through this ministry.

And the Prayer Shawl ministry has transitioned to Aaron Hartman with support from Nina Widmann.

If you have interest in helping with the flower or visitation ministries, please contact Connie Morrill-Hair. If you knit, crochet or have other yarn hobbies, please contact Aaron for additional information on ways you can help the prayer shawl ministry.

Here's to a New Year where the joy of serving becomes contagious.





# 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

# Banquet for a New Year

with Chef Joshua Gibson

Friday, January 19, 2024

5:30 pm

Fellowship Hall



Cost is \$50 per person

Buy your tickets at the church office

Make your reservation by Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>



## MENU

St. John's Banquet for a New Year  
January 19th 2024

### STARTERS

House Caesar Salad  
Creamy Chicken Gnocchi Soup

### MAIN COURSE

Smoky Bacon Wrapped  
Pork Tenderloin with Apple Chutney

### ACCOMPANIMENTS

Sweet Potato Puree  
Roasted Garli Broccolini

### DESSERT

Apple Dumpling with House Made  
Caramel Sauce served with  
Windy Knoll Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

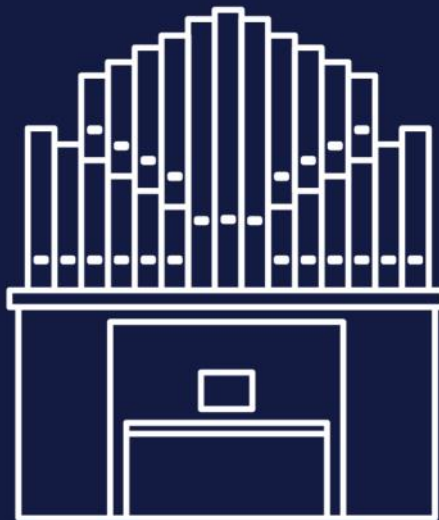
John A. Widmann, organ

Austin Widmann, trumpet

Karin Guide, saxophone

# ORGAN MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD

January 28 | 3:30 pm



freewill offering

ST. JOHN'S UCC

1811 Lincoln Way East  
Chambersburg, PA 17202

# Ladies LUNCHEON

It was a “Merry” Christmas lunch in a private dining room at Menno Haven’s Grille on a sunny Wednesday, December 13, for the luncheon ladies. Twelve were in attendance including Sarah Myers.

We always “catch up” on members of the congregation and on our individual lives as we enjoy a variety of lunches.

Bev Peters shared a reading about “Friendship” among women. This was followed by a surprise gift for each lady.

Longhorn Steakhouse was chosen for our January 10 meeting at 11:30. We welcome any St. John’s lady to join us as we begin the New Year.

## MENS BREAKFAST



We will be meeting Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 7am at Chris’s Kitchen (across from Perkins)

We look forward to seeing any and all for February’s Breakfast

# January BIRTHDAYS

01/01 Lucille Hopple

01/01 Paul Kaiser

01/01 Michael Hair

01/01 Sue McMurtray

01/01 David Dietrich

01/02 Carol Marotte

01/02 Liam Dietrich

01/04 Charles (Chip) Miller

01/04 Madeleine Miller

01/07 Ruth Ann Cuesta

01/09 Jonah Rook

01/10 Thomas Harrison

01/11 Deborah Olson

01/12 Jefferey Aldrich

01/14 Alan Young

01/15 Erik Strunk

01/18 Linda Barton

01/18 Jack Myers

01/19 Alex Strunk

01/20 Anna Knelle Stormer

01/20 Lisa Frantz

01/24 Calvin Frantz

01/25 Abbie Reichelderfer

01/25 Hannah Jean Myers

01/27 Paulette Wohl

01/28 Barb Wissinger

01/28 Brooke Reichelderfer

01/29 Douglas Stepler

01/30 Robert Schollaert

01/31 Emilio Cuesta





# January

7 Church School 8:45

Confirmation 11:30

14 Church School 8:45

Children's Corner during Worship

19 Tentative Snow Tubing and Lock in at 6:00

21 Church School 8:45

26 Tentative Snow Tubing and Lock in at 6:00

28 Church School 8:45

Children's Corner during Worship

Confirmation 11:30

## **We're Gonna Try This Again!!!!**

Since last years Snow tubing at Liberty Mountain was cancelled due to the warm weather conditions we are going to try again!

January 19 or 26 are the dates being considered. Snow making conditions and families choices will decide which of these dates we choose. Starting early also allows for February consideration. So, mark your calendars and give me input. We leave the church at 6:00 PM. Tube from 7-9 and return to the church around 10:00. A lock-in is offered if families are interested, with pick up the next morning at 10:00 AM

Service hours are available for use. Otherwise the cost is \$43 per person. Permissions, waivers, and up to date medical forms are required so please let me know your intent. Adult chaperones and drivers are needed as well.





**PUZZLE  
LENDING  
LIBRARY!**

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO  
BORROW A PUZZLE  
AND/OR DONATE  
PUZZLES!**

**PUZZLES ARE AVAILABLE  
IN THE BACK OF OUR  
LIBRARY**







**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** — *N. Aaron Hartman*

**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* 26

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)**

Sunday, January 7, 10 am (Sanctuary & Livestreamed)

Saturday, January 13, 5 pm (Fellowship Hall)

Saturday, February 10, 5 pm (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, February 11, 10 am (Sanctuary & Livestreamed)



**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](http://www.sjucc1811.org)*

***Office Hours: Mon —<sub>28</sub> Fri from 9 AM — 3 PM***