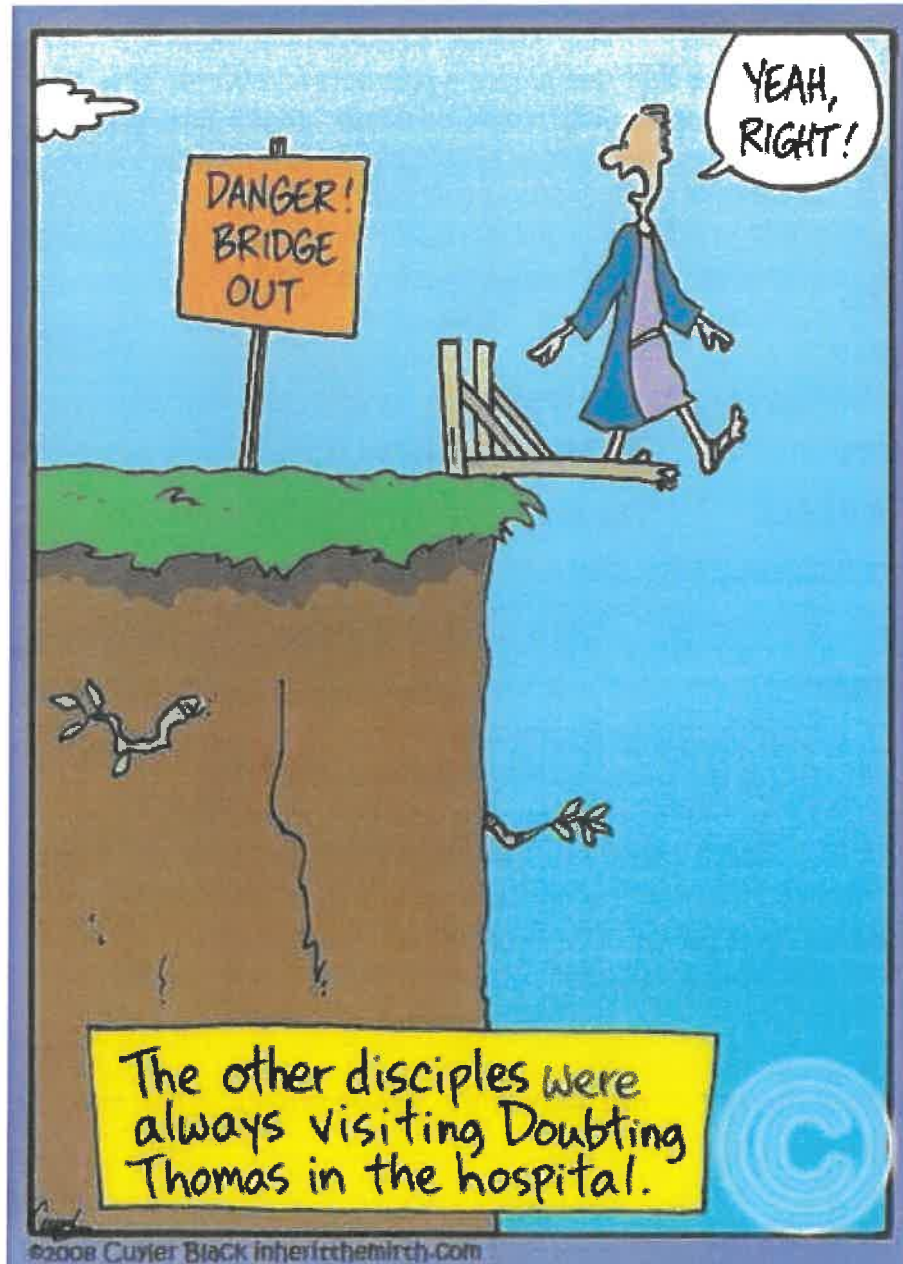


Holy Humor Sunday



*St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
April 12, 2026*

HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY & THOMAS

*Please stand in body or in spirit

What is "Holy Humor Sunday"? On this day we celebrate the unbridled joy of the good news of Christ's resurrection! It is "Holy Humor" Sunday, a tradition extending to some of the earliest Christian theologians who noted that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. Easter was "God's supreme joke played on death." So the Sunday after Easter became a "bright Sunday" filled with joy and laughter as people played jokes on each other, sang, danced, told jokes, and had fun. Our service today features a lighthearted feel with a sprinkling of jokes, all geared to help us experience joy more fully as we worship God together!

GATHERING SONG

"This is the Day"

UNISON WELCOME

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

"The peace of Christ be with you"

"And also with you"

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

OPENING SONG

"How Great Is Our God"

Chris Tomlin

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

adapted from Charlton United Methodist Church

We believe in God, who made us in His image.

We live, we laugh, we love, because we are like Him.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

He had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – our joy!

Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don't claim the happiness that is ours as your children, when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world.

Restore to us the joy of our salvation, as we worship today!

***OPENING HYMN #197**

"We Welcome Glad Easter"

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

from the United Church of Canada's Bay of Quinte Conference

O Great Laughing God, we come into your presence with joy and longing to be surprised. We thank you that you have given to us the gift of laughter and delight. These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth. May we find that in giving up to laughter there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit to renew our worship and our living. Amen.

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** *adapted from a prayer posted on RevGalBlogPals*
As we listen for your word and seek to follow your call, keep us mindful that you always have the last laugh. May we know your fire of love deeply in our being. May we be your love. May we bring your love. May your love reign as we rejoice with you this day, never taking ourselves too seriously, while always seeking you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Acts 2:14a, 22-32; 1 Peter 1:3-9

ANTHEM *"We Walk by Faith"* arr. Kenneth T. Kosche

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Roxanne Davenport
Children's Corner will be offered following the Children's Message

SCRIPTURE READING John 20:19-31

MEDITATION Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

A COMMUNION OF SAINTS AFFIRMATION OF HUMOR (insert)

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (DEBTS)

INVITATION TO GIVING

OFFERTORY

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE #706** *"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** *adapted from Roscoe UMC, Illinois*
Gracious God, grant us a joyful heart and a holy sense of humor. Give us the gift of faith, to be renewed and shared with others each day. Thank you for caring for each of us and for all of your creatures. Help us use these gifts to mold our corner of the world to be more and more like the heavenly realm, living and acting so that your work is done "on earth as it is in heaven." Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN #218** *"Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain"*

***COMMISSION & BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE (seated)

Join us following the service for coffee hour and a time of "Holy Humor" in the parlor!

The "Nursery Nook in the Narthex" quiet area and infant/toddler space in the Parlor are available for children and families to use during worship. Age-appropriate activity bags are also available. See the deacon for assistance.

Birthdays this week: 04/13 David Frantz and 04/15 Katie Boyer.

Worship Participants:	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Choir Director	Gary Crum
Worship Team	Neath Ham, Courtney Robertson, Swann Kongkeattikul, Diana Kongkeattikul, Roxanne Davenport, and Chris Willman-Bunge
Deacon in Charge	Diana Kongkeattikul
Lector	Erin Hartman
Children's Corner	Rebecca Pound
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz & Neath Ham
Bulletin cover	

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given in memory of Jeryl C. "Jerry" Miller given by his wife Cookie, sons Chip and Jon and their families.



St. John's Vision

We are called to love, to learn, to worship and to witness in Christ as a congregation that welcomes everyone, and seeks service that will advance God's realm on earth.

St. John's Mission

To grow in love of God and neighbor

Worship Resources:

Call to Worship adapted from Charlton United Methodist Church

Prayer of the Day from the United Church of Canada's Bay of Quinte Conference

Prayer for Illumination from RevGalBlogPals (adapted)

Prayer of Dedication from Roscoe UMC, Illinois (adapted)

Notes on Holy Humor Sunday from Heritage Presbyterian Church, Acworth, GA

Cover image from "Inherit the Mirth: Where faith meets funny" © Cuyler Black

A Communion of Saints: Affirmation of Humor

We affirm with the Bible that

"there is a time to weep and a time to laugh."

We affirm with John Chrysostom that

"laughter has been implanted in our souls."

We affirm with Thomas Aquinas that there is a time for

"playful deeds and jokes."

We affirm with Martin Luther that

"You have as much laughter as you have faith."

We affirm with John Calvin that

"we are nowhere forbidden to laugh."

We affirm with Francis De Sales that

"humor is a foundation for reconciliation."

We affirm with John Wesley that

"A sour religion is the devil's religion."

We affirm with Søren Kierkegaard that

"Humor is intrinsic to Christianity."

We affirm with Fyodor Dostoevsky that

"If a person laughs well they are a good person."

We affirm with G.K. Chesterton that

"A good joke is the closest thing we have to divine revelation."

We affirm with Dietrich Bonhoeffer that

"Ultimate seriousness is not without a dose of humor."

We affirm with Flannery O'Connor that

"Christianity is a strangely cheery religion."

We affirm with Kirster Stendhal that

"humor, along with irony, forms a safeguard against idolatry."

We affirm with Charles Schultz that

"Humor is proof that everything is going to be alright with God nevertheless."

We affirm with Elton Trueblood,

"Never trust a theologian without a sense of humor."

-compiled by Rev. Christ Anderson with help from the Joyful Noiseletter (adapted)

NEWS IN THE PEWS April 12, 2026

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, pastor@siucc1811.org (641) 260-1868 (cell)
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, manager@sjucc1811.org (717) 263-8593 (office)
Gary Crum, Music Director | Barbara Motichka, Organist
Roxanne Davenport, Director of Children & Youth
The Rev. Stephen W. Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

TODAY: Bible Study on the Book of Esther, chapters 7 & 8, 8 pm, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast)

Monday, April 13

1:30 pm Monday Afternoon Book Study – Conference Room 111 (Chapter 7)
6:30 pm Community Engagement Meeting – Conference Room 111 & Zoom
7:00 pm Boy Scouts – Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, April 14

5:30 pm Yoga – Room 202
6:00 pm Ladies' Bible Study– Zoom
6:00 pm Cub Scouts - Fellowship Hall (then break into smaller groups)

Thursday, April 16

6:00 pm Dance Class – Fellowship Hall
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice – Bell Room 117
6:15 pm Girl Scouts – Room 201
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room 103

Friday, April 17

Church Office is CLOSED

Sunday, April 19

8:45 am Sunday Morning Caffeine Church School Class – Parlor Room 104
8:45 am Godly Play Class – Room 119
8:45 am SPARK! Elementary Church School Class – Room 115
8:45 am Teen Discussion Class – Room 206
8:45 am Wired Word Church School Class – Room 116
8:45 am Upper Room Church School Class – Conference Room 111
10:00 am Sunday Worship – Sanctuary
8:00 pm Bible Study on Esther – chapter 9 (link in Friday e-blast)

Sunday Night Bible Study Join Pastor Caroline on Sunday evenings at **8 pm via Zoom** for a Bible study on the book of Esther. Our session on April 12 will focus on Esther Chapters 7 & 8. Zoom Meeting ID: 836 0593 5961 and Passcode 277938. A link for this opportunity is included in the weekly e-blast. Participants are encouraged to read from a variety of translations.

Bible and a Beer is an opportunity to talk about our faith in public. Join us on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Trojan Diner at 6:30 pm. Our next gathering will be April 20th.

Monday Afternoon Book Study We will read chapter 7 of Norman Wirzba's book "Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis" for our discussion on Monday, April 13, 1:30 pm in Conference Room 111. Come and join the conversation!

Combined Church School Class Join us for a continental breakfast and conversation on "what is Pentecost" led by Pastor Caroline on Sunday, May 17, 8:45 am in Fellowship Hall.

Pentecost Picnic will be held on Sunday, May 24 after worship. The menu includes hot dogs, chips, drinks, and dessert. We hope the weather will allow us to gather outside!

Race Against Poverty St. John's is a sponsor of the 16th Annual Race Against Poverty held the first weekend in June. This year, the race will be held on Saturday, June 6. We would be delighted to have you join our official St. John's team. Contact Pastor Caroline to learn more.

Mercersburg Association Spring Meeting will be held at Trinity UCC in Waynesboro on Sunday, May 3, 3-5 pm. This will be a hybrid meeting with a Zoom option to attend. Please contact Pastor Caroline if you would like to attend as one of two lay delegates.

Keystone Conference Annual Meeting will be held June 5-7, 2026 at Millersville University. The theme is "Joy at the Table Together!" If you would like to serve as one of our two lay delegates for this important and historic meeting, please contact Pastor Caroline.

Join us for Life Talk What's on your mind? Something that concerns or worries you? Do you need to vent? Just want to talk with other adults for a bit? Don't want to share in front of the entire congregation? Or you don't think it really needs to be a prayer request? Grab your snack and coffee, and meet in the parlor after services on Sunday mornings. Everyone is welcome.

Want to Stay in Touch? Contact the Church Office to be added to our email list! You can sign up to receive our regular weekly emails, Diana's Devotionals, and/or be part of the Prayer Chain.

Blueberry Bliss Spring Tea Tickets will be held on Saturday, April 25, 1:30 pm in Fellowship Hall. Tickets are available now \$35, cash or check. Limited quantities left.

2025 SJUCC Year End Financial Report is available upon request from the Church Office. This report is similar to what was shared at past mid-year Congregational Meetings.

April First Fruits will support organizations designated as part of the Lenten Projects. This year's recipients are African Mission Healthcare, the Peru School Project, and the United Church of Christ Disaster Emergency Fund. Via these offerings, we will support medical care in Africa, education in Peru, and support where individuals have been affected by natural disasters.

May/June Upper Room devotionals are currently available at the Welcome Center. We suggest a donation of \$1 for small print/\$2 for large print copies. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.