



# The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

February 2024

## From the Pastor

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Love. The word of the month, or at least of February 14. In the New Testament, Jesus talks about love a lot, especially in the gospel of John and in 1 John. In fact, in the writings of John the Apostle, almost half the references to love appear. And, it's a mix of God loving us, of us loving others, of God's love in us, and even what not to do with love (love the things of the world!). Still, with all of these references to love, the most famous quote does not come from scripture, but from a song, a chil-



dren's song: "Jesus Loves Me."

"Jesus Loves Me" is a Christian hymn written by Anna Bartlett Warner (1827-1915). The lyrics first appeared as a poem in the context of an 1860 novel called *Say and Seal*, written by her older sister Susan Warner (1819-1885), in which the words were spoken as a comforting poem to a dying child.

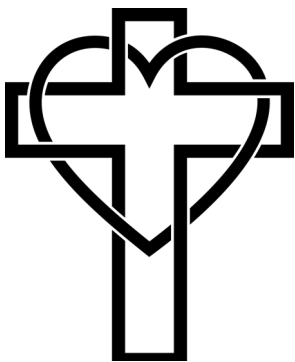
It first appeared in *Golden Shower of S[unday] S[chool] Melodies (1862)*, edited by Northeastern Baptist church musician William Bradbury (1816-1868). Reynolds claims that the tune name CHI-NA was the result of reports by missionaries who claimed over time that this was a favorite tune by Chinese children (Reynolds, 1976, p. 124).

Though the text makes sense in the context of the original story, many have found it necessary to substitute stanzas

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*The hymn has been adapted and translated probably more than any other hymn in the English language.*



## From the Pastor

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that they felt were more suitable for wider use. The hymn has been adapted and translated probably more than any other hymn in the English language. For example, one can find the text adapted by Japanese Buddhists: “Buddha loves me, this I know, / for Amida tells me so.” Other adaptations are more moralistic, attempting to guide children’s behavior:

*Jesus loves me when I’m good,  
When I do the things I should,  
Jesus loves me when I’m bad,  
Though it makes Him very sad.*

Lutheran minister Gregory Just Wismar suggests that the focus is on love rather than on biblical authority:

God has shown His love through Jesus Christ, a love that directs and shapes the lives of His people. Jesus says, “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you,” and then He takes it one step further by directing, “Abide in My love” (John 15:9). “Jesus loves me” assures singers of all ages that the Bible

tells us of Jesus’ love, the love that roots and grounds God’s people (Ephesians 3:17) and supports and sustains them in life and in death with childlike faith and abiding hope (Herl, et al, 2019, p. 661).

Of the many stories about this hymn, one of the most memorable came from the Swiss-German theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968). Numerous sources attest that they heard Barth cite the first stanza of the hymn in response to a question posed to him at the close of a series of lectures near the end of his life at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Other accounts say that it took place at Union Seminary, Richmond, Virginia. A weary Barth agreed to respond to questions at the conclusion of the lectures. The story has been retold countless times as a sermon illustration. The seminary president posed one, “Of all the theological insights you have ever had, which do you consider to be the greatest of them all?” Others recall

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## From the Pastor

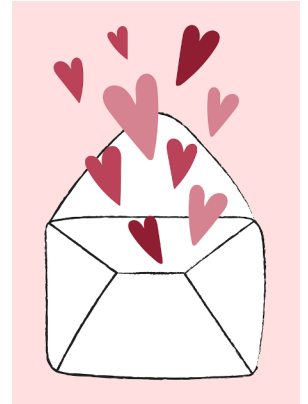
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that the question was, “How would you summarize your theology in a single sentence?” Accounts indicate some quiet drama followed while the great scholar meditated. Whichever question was asked, the answer was “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!” Regardless of the possible apocryphal nature of the facts, the truth of the hymn remains.

And, St. John UCC church history recounts that Rev. Ed Culver preached a similar sermon one time!

As together we journey through this month of February, full of hearts and candy and white paper doilies, do remember how much God loves you, and if you get to feeling down because of the cold and the dark and the other negative influences in your life, pick up your Bible and read 1 John, or just hum the song “Jesus Loves Me” and see if your heart feels a bit lighter, and you feel a bit warmer, because of the love of our God that surrounds you, always!

Rev. Torie Front



*Do remember  
how much God  
loves you.*

## Board of Christian Nurture

The Board of Christian Nurture will meet Tuesday, February 6 at 4:30 pm.

Join us for a movie outing on February 11! After worship, we will carpool to RJ Cinema in Eastgate for a private showing of *Jesus Revolution*. Movie tickets are paid for—you need only bring money for lunch. Please sign up outside the Cozy Corner if you’d like to attend.

SAVE THE DATE for the annual Rummage Sale! The sale will be held June 6-8, 2024 from 10 am - 2 pm.



## The Visitor

### Ministry Board of Elders



The Board of Elders will meet on Thursday, February 8 at 2:30 pm.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is February 14 this year. Please join us for worship at 5:30 pm. There will also be Lenten services on February 21, March 6, and March 20, time TBA.

The Jeremiah Bible study, led by Rev. Steve Cummins, will resume for the Lenten season after worship on February 18th. Each session will begin at 11:15 am and conclude at 12:15 pm.

Rev. Torie will be away on Sunday, Feb. 25. We welcome Rev. Ruth Hopkins as pulpit supply.

### Lectionary

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon Date
Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39	January 30 <i>(Afternoon Bible study only—will meet at 3 pm. No Mt. View meeting)</i>	February 4
2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9	February 6	February 11
Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15	February 13	February 18
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31 Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38	February 20	February 25

### Important Dates in February

Feb. 4		Scout Sunday
Feb. 4	11 am	Men's Group Meeting
Feb. 11	Noon	<i>Jesus Revolution</i> Movie Outing
Feb. 13	5 pm	Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper
Feb. 14	5:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Worship Service
Feb. 18	11:15 am	Jeremiah Bible Study resumes
Feb. 21		Lenten Service



### Board of Deacons—Pantry Items for February


Feed my Sheep:

- peanut butter
- canned soup
- pasta
- crackers
- Ramen noodles
- canned fruit
- macaroni and cheese

CarPax:

- cheese crackers
- peanut butter crackers
- tuna pouches
- individual packs of cookies
- individual packs of nuts
- bottled water
- fruit cups

### Board of Deacons—Winter Wear



# HATS, GLOVES, & SCARVES

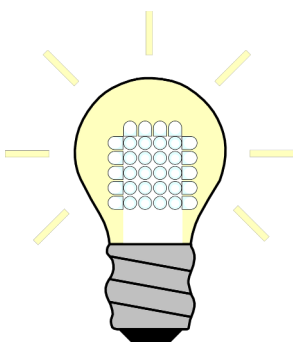
We are still in need of warm gloves, hats, scarves, and coats—especially for men! Thank you for your generosity.

## The Visitor

### Ministry Board of Property and Finance



*At our January meeting we usually identify and prioritize the projects that we wish to accomplish this year.*



A huge “Thank You” to all that attended worship service and the Annual Meeting in January. P&F presented the Ministry Spending Plan (budget) for 2024 and asked for permission to withdraw funds from Memorial Endowment to supplement our income. Both were graciously and unanimously approved by our members that were present. We also recognized and thanked all who had recently given special gifts to the church. These included: the Ruth Schnier Estate gift, the Stained Glass Fund, Al Edwards gift of carpet for the sanctuary, the Amy Wright Estate gift, the Marge Craig Estate gift, the Natalie Renaker Estate gift, Bob and Virgie Cutter gift of blinds for the choir room, the Marci Denniston Estate gift, the Sue Meyer gift, the Schulte Family gifts for the pantry, and the Barb Culver and Resonate Foundation gifts for the pantry. All these gifts have blessed us with the funds to remodel the sanctuary, replace the roof, restore the stained glass window, provide new blinds for the choir

room, and to help with other upcoming projects. I’m sure that there are others, who have recently given gifts that I have not mentioned, and I apologize for that, but we are indeed very, very thankful.

At our January meeting we usually identify and prioritize the projects that we wish to accomplish this year. For this year we have selected several projects, among which are: tuck pointing and sealing of the brick, replace the ceiling and lights over the steps that lead down to Fellowship Hall, better lighting of the bulletin boards outside the sanctuary, safety handrails in bathroom stalls, new LED lighting in Fellowship Hall, new front entry doors, and several others. Any remaining monies from all the gifts listed above will be used towards the funding of these projects. If you have other thoughts about what we should be addressing, please feel free to let us know what you think needs to be done.

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## February Birthdays

- February 8 - Jean Pabst
- February 12 - Jennifer Bray
- February 15 - Mary Lou Davis
- February 21 - Joe Clay
- February 21 - John Lower
- February 23 - Verna Ficke
- February 27 - Rick Caudill
- February 27 - Carol Nieman



## Ministry Board of Property and Finance

*(Continued from page 6)*

Workshop Day will be February 24th. Please join us for a morning of fixing, repairing, cleaning and building as we work on some small projects around the church. There is always work for many different skill levels and any help is appreciated. Workshop Day starts at 8am and usually ends around noon, and you can come whenever and stay as long as you want...and there is always some great refreshments and wonderful fellowship.

Property and Finance could use another member. If you are interested at all in becoming a

member, please feel free to attend a meeting and see if you might want to join and contribute. We welcome all.

This year is a leap year, so this month we get an extra day to worship and praise our great loving God. Please make every moment count as we share our faith with others and live the life of service to which we are called. Thanks and God Bless.

Gary Kurtz

*This year is a leap year, so this month we get an extra day to worship and praise our great loving God.*



## St. John UCC Regularly Scheduled Events

Weekly			
Event	Day	Time	Location
Handbell Choir	Sunday	9 am	Sanctuary
Worship	Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Bible Study (Afternoon)	Tuesday	1 pm	Bible Study Room
Bible Study (Evening)	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Mt. View Terrace
Chancel Choir	Wednesday	6:15 pm	Choir Room
Feed My Sheep	Thursday	4:30 pm	Outside

Monthly			
Event	Day	Time	Location
Communion	1st Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 pm	Cozy Corner
Pizza Path	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various
Men's Group	Various Sundays	11 am	Various
Missionary Sewing	1st Wednesday	10 am	Fellowship Hall
Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5 pm	Fellowship Hall
Christian Nurture	2nd Wednesday	5 pm	Fellowship Hall
Elders	2nd Thursday	2 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	Last Thursday	6 pm	Reads' home
Church Council	3rd Thursday	5:45 pm	Fellowship Hall
Work-ship Day	Last Saturday	8 am	Church

# Valentine's Day Delight

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message in the first few rows. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

The Message : \_\_\_\_\_

E	V	O	L	E	U	R	T	O	N	E	B	I	L	B	L	G	I	E	K
D	O	N	V	D	R	A	C	Y	D	N	A	C	O	A	R	N	N	L	C
H	E	A	R	T	E	N	T	I	N	E	E	W	S	E	O	I	D	A	I
Y	B	C	C	A	R	D	S	A	P	R	A	E	E	I	T	B	E	X	S
C	E	H	O	A	B	N	G	O	E	N	D	T	T	N	I	U	N	T	E
H	M	E	U	R	N	E	L	I	D	T	I	C	E	E	D	R	S	T	V
C	I	A	T	E	A	E	A	A	S	N	E	L	E	A	C	E	H	Y	O
U	N	E	A	R	V	T	R	U	G	F	A	H	D	F	X	H	H	F	L
P	E	H	B	N	B	R	E	C	F	V	N	R	H	E	M	C	C	L	E
I	Q	B	E	Z	O	G	A	A	.	B	R	E	C	G	M	T	M	T	M
D	W	D	H	W	M	R	M	T	X	K	L	R	K	K	C	R	A	N	B
D	Y	N	L	K	D	X	S	N	Y	V	R	I	N	R	T	L	A	W	C
E	T	R	B	A	L	L	O	O	N	S	M	M	H	K	O	M	J	H	T
V	R	G	A	K	J	W	K	P	R	T	V	D	L	C	C	C	V	Z	C
O	J	T	H	U	N	C	X	M	Z	T	Q	A	O	T	F	R	Z	T	C
T	P	U	Y	F	R	Y	P	H	L	X	Q	H	N	Y	T	Z	U	M	D
I	G	X	B	L	Q	B	T	X	H	G	C	R	C	P	M	B	N	S	C
O	T	C	S	E	C	R	E	T	A	D	M	I	R	E	R	J	J	Z	H
N	P	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	N	X	B	L	H	G	N	C	P	X	R
J	B	O	X	O	F	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	S	R	M	R	N

- |                   |           |                |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| admirer           | cherub    | greeting card  |
| affection         | chocolate | heart          |
| balloons          | crush     | hug            |
| beau              | cupid     | lovesick       |
| be mine           | decorate  | secret admirer |
| bow and arrow     | devotion  | St. Valentine  |
| box of chocolates | envelope  | true love      |
| candy card        | February  |                |
| charmed           | flowers   |                |



United in Christ's love, we seek justice for all.

**St. John United  
Church of Christ**

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SAVE THE DATE

# German Heritage Dinner

MARCH 9  
5-7 PM



THE MEN'S GROUP INVITES YOU TO THE

# FATTUESDAY PANCAKESUPPER

**FEB. 13**



**5 PM - 6 PM**

**Free Food & Fellowship**