



The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

January 2024

In this issue:

Christian Nurture	2
Annual Meeting	2
Deacons	3
Pantry Needs	3
Elders	4
Property & Finance	5
Lectionary	6
Regular Events	7
Birthdays	8
Special Events	8
Save-the-Date	8
Puzzle	9

From the Pastor



"See, I am making all things new."

Revelation 21:5 - And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." As we enter into this new year, I think these words from our Still Speaking God are very appropriate. With a fresh start, a clean slate, perhaps God will work through each one of us to do something new in our lives. Perhaps it will be a relationship, perhaps it will be a healing, perhaps it will be some holy insight into

something at the church! A new way of doing meetings, or new ideas for our Feed My Sheep program, especially regarding the African refugees in our community. God will definitely be involved in our new pew cushions, which can't arrive soon enough!

As the ball drops, as 2023 turns into 2024 (even if you aren't awake at midnight!), as the days start growing longer, as the Epiphany light guides us as a church, I encourage you to keep your heart open to what new things God may be doing in your life. As disciples of Jesus Christ, I can only imagine how exciting this new year could be at St. John UCC, and look forward to continuing to serve in ministry with you.

-Rev. Torie

The Visitor

Ministry Board of Christian Nurture



The Board of Christian Nurture will meet Tuesday, Jan. 2 at church at 11 am. Come hungry, as this will be a lunch meeting!

Lunch Bunch will meet Sunday, Jan. 14 after worship for a celebration of the 2023 Pizza Path! If you'd like to get a t-shirt from

the Pizza Path, please sign up on the sheet provided. You don't have to have completed the Pizza Path to get the shirt.

Our next Progressive Dinner will be at church on Friday, January 19 at 5 pm. More details to follow.

ANNUAL MEETING

2023

Attend the annual meeting for:

- Ministry highlights of 2023
- Presentation of financials

“That they all may be one”

21

JANUARY

AFTER WORSHIP

Ministry Board of Deacons

We welcome two new members – Karen Carey and Joe Clay! Thank you for joining us in overseeing how our church serves our community in Christian love.

We might be short-handed on Thursdays in January to

hand out food from 4:30-5:30, so if you could come and donate an hour of your time, that would be great! Please see Susie Koehler with any questions.

Please pick up any of the below items when you are at the grocery, if you can.

"Feed My Sheep" is handing out roughly 100 bags of food each week – amazing!

Pantry Needs for January

Feed my Sheep:

- Peanut butter
- canned soup
- pasta
- crackers
- Ramen noodles

CarPax:

- Cheese crackers
- Peanut butter crackers
- Tuna pouches
- Individual packs cookies
- Individual packs of nuts
- Bottled water
- Fruit cups



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 Elders

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.

We welcome Charlotte Bell, Steve Culver, and Steve Prater to the Ministry Board of Elders! Your fresh insights will help us continue to keep our worship services fresh and relevant!

The Chancel Choir will resume practices on Wednesday at 6:15pm on January 3 – if you've thought about joining the choir, now is a great time to do so!

The Handbell Choir will resume practicing on Sunday,

January 14, at 9:00am - if you'd like to give it a try, please join us!

Our worship service on January 7 will celebrate the Baptism of Christ, and everyone will be invited forward to renew their own baptismal vows after taking communion.

Rev. Torie did not take all of her vacation in 2023, so she will be on a carryover vacation from January 22-28. There will be no Bible study on January 23. Rev. Ruth Beck, retired, and a member at First UCC in North College Hill, will be providing our pulpit supply on the 28th.



Jeremiah, as depicted by Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel ceiling

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is February 14 this year. We will have Lenten Gatherings on Feb. 21, March 6, and March 20, time TBA.



Upcoming Events

Missionary Sewing will resume their meetings and sewing and fellowship (and lunches!) on January 3, from 10 am - 2 pm. All are welcome to attend, and there are things you can do that don't involve sewing!

On Sunday, Jan. 7, we'll take down the Christmas tree in the narthex and undecorate the Cozy Corner. Thanks for whatever time you can spare to help.

Board of Property and Finance

The New Year is upon us and we look forward to another year of serving you, our members, and the community in any way we can, as we continue to keep our church building functioning and our finances supportive so that we can do just that.

In November we celebrated the opening of our newly renovated sanctuary which seemed to please our congregation and visitors. We should have our new pew cushions by late February that will provide some additional comfort, and the restoration of our beautiful Christ Ascending stained glass window will start right after Easter.

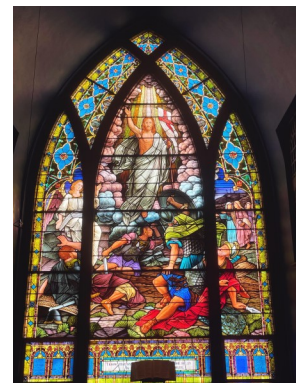
The Pohnpei UCC Church, which uses our sanctuary every Sunday after our own worship service, also seems to be enjoying our newly renovated sanctuary. We get to see them occasionally as we are leaving and they are entering the church. They seem to be a very happy group with many young families with

children. Hopefully at some point it would be nice to do some sort of fellowship, service or even worship service together.

At the start of every year, our board reviews our long list of church improvement projects and prioritizes and selects projects that we would like to complete that year. We will update you on our choices once we review that list. Please feel free to let us know of any project or need you would like us to consider. Two major projects we are pursuing are the tuck pointing and repair of our exterior brick walls and the sale of the parsonage.

The end of 2023 brought the resignation of Christy Baker, our church secretary. We pray for her and her family as they are facing some difficult times. After a phone call and a plea from Jo Ann Douglas, Jane Owen, the current secretary at St. Paul Lutheran Church, has graciously

(Continued on page 6)



We should have our new pew cushions by late February, and the restoration of our beautiful Christ Ascending stained glass window will start right after Easter.



Jane Owen

The Visitor

Board of Property and Finance

(Continued from page 5)



filled our secretary position, in addition to continuing as secretary for St Paul. Jane will start work immediately on much of our current needs, but will not keep regular office hours until after the first of the year. We feel extremely blessed to have Jane, as

she has helped us quite a bit in the past. Please stop by and say hello when you visit the church.

We are always grateful to the entire congregation for your service to the church and the community in so many ways. We hope everyone has a joyous and thankful New Year.

Lectionary

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon Date
Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11	January 2	January 7
1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51	January 9	January 14
Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20	January 16	January 21
Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Mark 1:21-28	<i>No Bible study this week</i>	January 28

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

The Visitor

January Birthdays



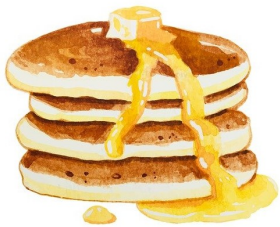
January 10	Emily Hogeback
January 13	Ruth Jean Kretschmar
January 15	Rev. Torie Front
January 21	George Clary
January 22	Jane Hendrix
January 23	Kathy Bentley
January 24	Gary Kurtz

Important Dates in January



January 3	Chancel Choir resumes
January 7	Baptism of Christ & renewal of vows
January 7	Finish un-decorating the building
January 14	Handbell Choir resumes
January 14	Pizza Path Celebration
January 21	Annual Meeting
January 22-28	Rev. Torie away

Save the Date



Save the date 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.

The annual Mardi Gras Pancake Supper will be on Tuesday, February 13 from 5 - 6 pm. Thanks to the Men's Group for hosting!



Winter Word Search



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

**BOOTS CHRISTMAS COAT FIREPLACE FLAKE FREEZING GLOVES HANUKKAH
HAT KWANZAA MITTENS ORNAMENTS PRESENTS SANTA SCARF SHOVEL
SKATING SKIING SLEDDING SNOW SNOWBALL SNOWDAY SNOWMAN STAR
STOCKING TOBOGGAN WINTER**



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

**St. John United
Church of Christ**

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**A CALL FOR SONKA-RUBATE
SUPPORT**

**Informational Dinner
and Fundraiser**

Saturday, January 6th 5p-7p
Immanuel UCC-St. Bernard
210 Jefferson Ave.
St. Bernard, Ohio 45217

SONKA is connecting and building on our historical relationship with Rubate Teacher's College in Rubate, Kenya! Four delegates from SONKA will be traveling to Kenya in January to reconnect with our beloved neighbors in Kenya

This trip will pave way for future mission and youth trips that may directly affect your congregation. Your support will be vital in reviving and expanding a partnership that has long been at the heart of SONKA collaboration and ministry.



Immanuel UCC in St. Bernard invites us to join them for a complimentary dinner Saturday, Jan. 6, from 5 pm to 7 pm. The purpose of this gathering is to raise awareness and support for SONKA's upcoming delegation trip to Kenya in January. This trip marks a transformative step toward future mission and youth trips.