



The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

March 2025

Inside:

Elders	3
Ash Wednesday	3
Deacons	4
Christian Nurture	5
Scripture Readings	5
Property & Finance	6
Schedule	8
Puzzle	9

From the Pastor

The season of Lent is upon us. Starting with the Pancake Supper, fortified by Friday night Fish Frys, encouraged by periodic Lenten lunches, and coming to a close with a St. John UCC Seder meal and perhaps some donuts on Easter Sunday! OK, can you tell I was hun-

gry when I sat down to write this?!

Interestingly enough, outside of St. John UCC, Lent is generally viewed as a season of fasting. Of denial. Or not eating certain, or favorite, foods. Check out these explanations I found online:

WHEN ARE FASTING & ABSTINENCE REQUIRED DURING LENT?

FASTING & ABSTINENCE **ABSTINENCE**

Catholics are obligated to practice **fasting & abstinence** on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday.

In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of **abstinence**.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Spiritual Discipline & Penance

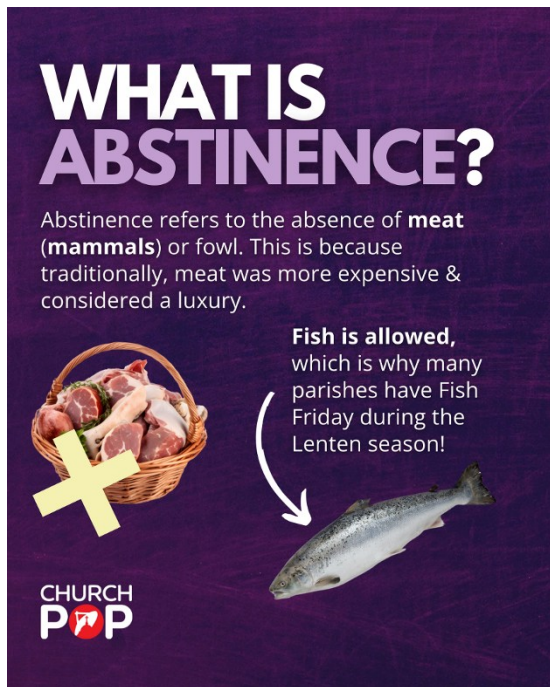
Fasting consists of having one full meal, as well as two small meals that together are not equal to a full meal.

full meal + smaller meals

In the United Church of Christ, there is no requirement for fasting or abstinence. If in using

these as a spiritual practice, you find yourself strengthening
(Continued on page 2)

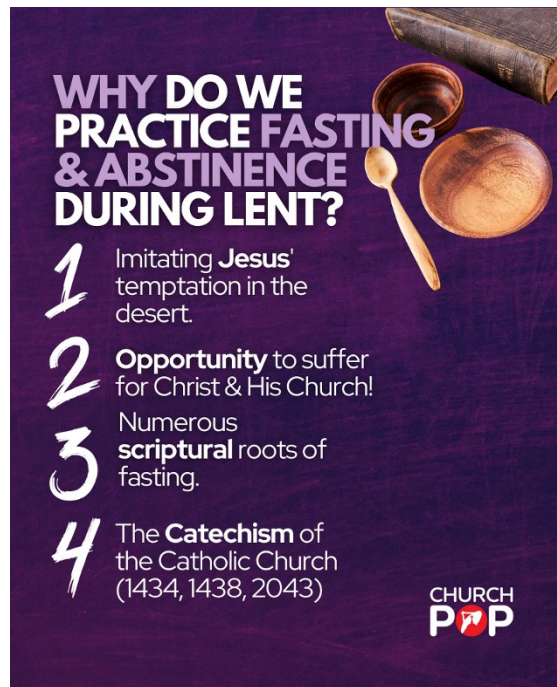
From the Pastor



(Continued from page 1)

your faith and growing closer to God, then I think they are good things to do. If however, you use them as a diet aid (which I have done in the past!), then just call it a diet and move on!

In one of our scripture readings in Through the Bible in a Year leading up to this time of Lent, we read these words in Deuteronomy 16:14-15: “Be joyful at your festival—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. For seven days celebrate the festival to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and



in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.”

When we gather together for a meal, whether it's pancakes provided by The Men's Group, a soup supper at St. Peter and St. Paul UCC, or the traditional St. John UCC Seder meal lovingly prepared by Susie, we do so as God's people, coming together to celebrate our faith, and sharing in the joy of the moment. So as we walk through this season of Lent, may we balance out our time of prayer and reflection, our acts of penitence and servanthood, with the joy made complete in the presence of God's people, and thus our Lord as well. I'm looking forward to journeying with you through the 2025 Lenten season.

-Rev. Torie

Ministry Board of Elders

Ash Wednesday is March 5. St. John UCC will offer an Ash Wednesday service at noon on March 5. We will worship in the Cozy Corner and have a soup lunch after. At 6:30 pm we will participate with “SONKA 513” in a joint Ash Wednesday service, at Sts. Peter and Paul UCC (see details below). Phil Hogan will drive us there in style, so we hope that you will consider joining us for the evening service – in fact, why not do both?!

The bus will depart from St. John at 4:30 pm—please **sign up** outside the Cozy Corner if you’d like to ride with us.

Special Music during Lent: Our handbell choir will play during worship on March 9. We will also welcome two guest musicians this month: Diane Magill, flutist, on March 16, and Audrey Schmid, trumpet, on March 23.

We welcome Rev. Steve Cummins as our **guest preacher** on March 30, while Rev. Torie (finally) takes her last 2024 vacation Sunday which was scheduled in January! Thank you, Rev. Steve, for filling in.



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

Region 513 Joint Service
March 5, 2025
At St. Peter & St. Paul
UCC, located at 3001
Queen City Ave.
A warm soup supper will be
served starting at 5:30 PM.



Ministry Board of Deacons

Hello from the Deacons!

Feed My Sheep is doing well. We are serving 60 to 75 families each week. We do have a few **pantry needs**: reusable plastic bags, dish soap and personal hygiene items such as bath soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, and razors.

Feed My Sheep has also been providing a **carry-out meal** once a month – in February we served Walking Tacos. In March the meal will be ham and green beans. It

takes lots of people to make meal service happen – we are grateful for our helpers!

We are planning a **retreat** in April at Higher Ground for our Feed My Sheep volunteers. Plans are for relaxing, enjoying each others company and of course enjoying great food. See Rev. Torie or Susie for more information.

There are deacons at the church every Thursday getting ready to serve our community from 4:30-5:30. Stop by and give us a hand or just have a chat.

There are deacons at the church every Thursday getting ready to serve our community from 4:30-5:30.



Spring
FORWARD
March 9th

Ministry Board of Christian Nurture

March's **Lunch Bunch** outing will be on March 9 after worship, at LaRosa's in Blue Ash (4836 Cooper Rd.).

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, March 23 for a special **fellowship event!** We'll lunch on pizza and popcorn, play chair volleyball, and watch the movie *Encanto*.

As of Feb. 26, this year's **M&M Fundraiser** has raised \$571.50! Please bring in any outstanding funds. Thank you for your generosity!

The Hospitality Team is accepting donations of **birthday or anniversary cards & envelopes**, to send to our members throughout the year.

The Ministry Board of Christian Nurture would like to hear from you. What would be helpful for you to help grow your faith and strengthen your relationships with others at St. John UCC? Please make a note or speak to a board member whenever you have a thought! Thank you!



Scripture Readings This Month

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon Date
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for Feb. 25-March 3	March 4	March 9
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for March 4-10	March 11	March 16
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for March 11-17	March 18	March 23
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for March 18-24	<i>No Bible study this week</i>	March 30 <i>(Rev. Steve Cummins preaching)</i>

Ministry Board of Property and Finance



We will be considering overhauling the heating system this year, hopefully before next winter

The month of February brought snow and very cold temperatures again to our area. The old heating system at our church struggles to provide adequate heat to some areas of the church, and at other times it provides an over-abundance of warmth to other areas. It is difficult to effectively control the heat in the various parts of the building due to the age of the piping, the failing control valves, the noisy air compressor and the location of the thermostats. We actually have two systems that heat the church, both using the hot water provided by the boiler. The first system sends hot water to the fin registers that are located against the walls in many rooms. These registers heat the air and a convection current then circulates the warm air around the room. The second system is a floor heating system where hot water is pumped through tubing embedded in the floors. This heats the floors which in turn heats the air in the rooms. When it is in use, this is a very effective method of heat-

ing and heats nearly all of the rooms on the first floor. Needless to say, we will be considering overhauling the entire system this year hopefully before next winter.

We have been reviewing and refining the details of a new digital message board to replace the old illuminated sign outside, and we are near an agreement on the looks of the new sign. The sign company will prepare the necessary drawings and sketches in order to proceed with the process of getting city approval. Once approved, we hope to see it installed sometime this summer at a total cost of around \$27,000, paid for by previous bequests to the church. We are also still selecting and refining the details of the installation of new entry doors and glass in the lobby which we also hope to be completed this summer.

The Work-Ship/Mission Trip Day in February was a totally awesome, inspiring and heart-warming event as many mem-

(Continued on page 7)



Ministry Board of Property and Finance

(Continued from page 6)

bers attended and participated in eating, working and playing together. So much work was done!! Many thanks to Susie Koehler for the food and fellowship. We are considering another Work-Ship day this month.. will keep you posted.

Many thanks to Michelle Bunke and Steve Culver for putting together a new employment contract to be used for new staff members. It will be used first to employ our new audio/video technician, Isabella Torres, who has been in training for the last few months. Please welcome her when you see her.

Many times we are asked by someone if they can do some work around the church in exchange for some needed cash. After some discussion about safety, liability and payments, we felt that we could develop a list of outside tasks that could be completed relatively quickly and with little supervision, and payment could be made in the form of a gift card. This would be another great way to serve our neighbors in need and help the church.

When you get a chance, take a look at the new ceiling and lighting over the steps to Fellowship Hall. New paint is coming. Many thanks to Rick Caudill for helping with the demolition of the old ceiling, which was difficult, hazardous and very messy.

As always, give us your thoughts and prayers, and let us know how we are doing.

Peace and blessings from P&F.

FAT TUESDAY

FREE Pancake Dinner
March 4th 5 - 6 PM



Pancakes, sausage, eggs and all the fixins.
Fellowship Hall
PLUS Mardi Gras Music, Beads & Fun!

Sponsored by The St. John Men's Group

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	Fellowship Hall

Monthly			
Event	Day	Time	Location
Communion	1st Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 pm	Cozy Corner
Lunch Bunch	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various
Men's Group	Various Sundays	11 am	Various
Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5 pm	Fellowship Hall
Christian Nurture	1st Tuesday	5 pm	Fellowship Hall
Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	3rd Tuesday	2:15 pm	Church
Church Council	3rd Thursday	6 pm	Fellowship Hall
Work-ship Day	Last Saturday	8 am	Church

LENT WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the words found in the word bank.

Word bank:

ALMSGIVING	FRIDAY	PRAYER
ASH	GOOD	REPENTANCE
CATHOLIC	HOLY	SACRIFICE
DAYS	JESUS	SATURDAY
EASTER	LENT	SEASON
FAITH	NIGHTS	SUNDAY
FASTING	PALM	TRIDUUM
FORTY	PENANCE	WEDNESDAY

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



St. John United Church of Christ

729 Jefferson Ave. • Reading, OH 45215

Phone: 513-821-1740

Email: stjohnuccreading49@gmail.com

Website: stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com



German Heritage Dinner

Traditional sauerkraut dinner with German sausage, mashed potatoes, green beans, German rye, rolls, drinks & dessert.
All included for one low price!

Saturday, March 8th, 2025
5:00 – 7:00 PM



Featuring the
Enzian German Dancers

St. John United Church of Christ
729 Jefferson Ave.
Reading, Ohio 45215
(513) 821-1740

www.stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com

Check us out on Facebook

**Great Food and
Entertainment!**

Tickets are Limited – Purchase in Advance:

Adults: \$15

Children age 12 and under: \$10

Win raffle prizes and Split-the-Pot !!!

Tickets are limited, so please contact
the church office at 513-821-1740 to purchase tickets in advance.

Hosted by the St. John UCC Men's Group with proceeds going to the
Bob Christophel Memorial Scholarship Fund supporting a Reading High School student.