



JANUARY 2023

# THE VISITOR

The Newsletter of St. John United Church of Christ - Reading

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## RESOLUTIONS

**by Reverend Torie Front**

As we enter a new calendar year, in our secular lives, we may have been making New Year's Resolutions - things we want to change about ourselves in 2023, or things we want to accomplish this year.

Here are the top 10 New Year's Resolutions:

- Exercise More
- Lose Weight
- Get Organized
- Learn a New Skill or Hobby
- Live Life to the Fullest
- Save more Money/Spend Less Money
- Quit Smoking
- Spend More Time With Family and Friends

As I look over this list, I realize how sad it is. These are all things that we should be doing. Period. Why? Well, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, tells us this:

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body."

Why do we need to make a resolution to do what we already should be doing? (continued pg. 2)



## RESOLUTIONS (CONT.)

And, what does it mean to 'live life to the fullest?' Go on exotic vacations? Buy whatever you want? Share what time, treasure and talent God has given you to help others? Ahhh - now we might be getting somewhere. And, isn't that also something that we should be doing anyway? James 1:27 says: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world." This isn't just a New Year's Resolution, this is a guidebook for how we should live. Are called to live, because of, and through the power of, faith.

As we enter together into his new year, perhaps it's not so much a New Year's Resolution that we need to make, but a recommitment to our Triune God.

Because when we put out trust in Him, when we let the Holy Spirit guide us - our thoughts and actions - then I think outcomes will be amazing.

In our ever changing world, with our ever changing personal circumstances, may the words from Hebrews 13:8 speak to our hearts:

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Let us therefore live our lives secure in the love of our Savior, and stive to live as our faith guides him. Amen.

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WHY DO WE NEED TO MAKE A RESOLUTION TO DO WHAT WE ALREADY SHOULD BE DOING?

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# BOARD OF CHRISTIAN NURTURE



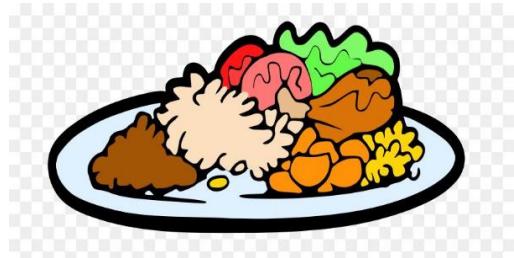
Following the popular and creative concept of "The Donut Trail", St. John UCC's Ministry Board of Christian Nurture is offering the **2023 Pizza Path**. 12 different local pizzerias have been selected and we will visit one of them each month. Like The Donut Trail, you will have a 'passport' that you can get initialed at each pizzeria, and in December, after we visit the final stop on The Pizza Path, all completed Pizza Path 2023 Passports can be exchanged for a free t-shirt!

Each month, usually on the 2nd Sunday of the month, the Ministry Board of Christian Nurture will set up a luncheon at the pizzeria of the month. If, however, you are not able to join us after worship that day, you can go to that pizzeria anytime that month and get your 2023 Pizza Path Passport stamped.

We hope you enjoy not only the pizza, but the fellowship time with your Family of Faith, as together we embark on "The 2023 St. John UCC Pizza Path!"



Chair Yoga will return on Thursday, January 5th at 5:45pm in the Fellowship Hall!



Our next **Dinner Depot** is Sunday, January 15th, immediately following worship. Please pick up your containers for your single serving meal and your information sheet ahead of time. As before, we will ask that each participant donate one meal to be delivered to a church member as needed. Then, for each additional meal you bring, you may take a different meal home, thus building up your own unique selection of homemade meals!



The **first euchre game** in 2023 will be held on January 19th at 2:00pm at Bruce and Linda Read's house. If you are going to join us, please call Linda at 513-485-6009 so we know how many tables to set up!

Next Meeting: Wed., January 11th 5pm

## BOARD OF DEACONS



Thank you, thank you, thank you--to all who helped make such a difference to our community over the holiday season. Between regular and special bags of groceries, our first-ever in-house free shopping experience, the collection of gift cards for Christmas presents, and traveling to Hope Emergency Programs, the amazing outreach of love that this church provided made such a different in so many lives. Thank you!



And, there will continue to be opportunities to make a difference in our community this year as well. Stay tuned for needs in our Food Pantry, lovingly called "The Feed My Sheep" Program. We will have an opportunity to pack food at Hands Against Hunger, and at least one non-Christmas trip to the Hope Emergency Program.

It is so wonderful to be apart of a church that reaches out and helps--what a blessing we are to so many, and how many blessings we have received in return!

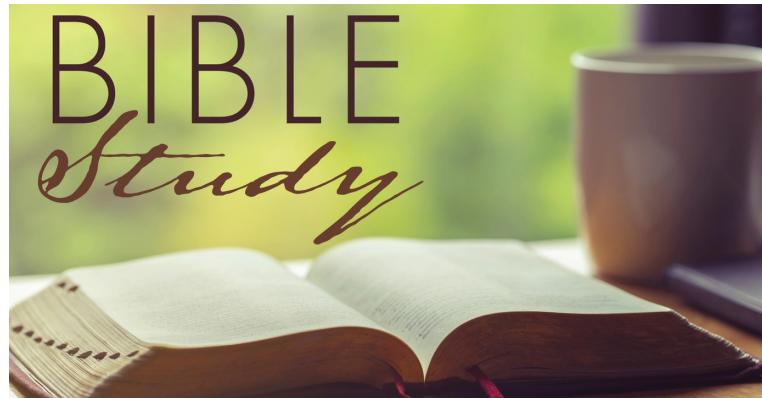
## BOARD OF ELDERS



January 29th is a Fifth Sunday of the month--and that means special music here at St. John UCC. If you've been

enjoying the music in worship and would like to join the **Handbell Choir or the Chancel Choir**, please talk to

Debbie Cummins--we'd love to have you join us as we praise our Triune God through music!



St. John UCC continues to offer two **Bible Studies** each week. The first, every Tuesday at 1:00pm, at St. John. The second, every Tuesday at 6:30pm, in the Mount View Terrace Common Room. This month, the January 24th Bible Studies will be moved in January 26th at 11:00am at St. John, because Rev. Torie will be at the Annual Living Water Clergy Retreat at the Bellwether Farm. Please consider joining us at Bible Study this month!



In 2023, we continue to search for **Worship Volunteers** for each worship. Starting this year, we will trial the option to sign-up to be the *Liturgist* on a weekly basis, rather than monthly. Rev. Torie will send you your words each week! *Greeters and Ushers* will sign-up on a monthly basis. If you don't mind arriving at church at 9:30am, consider greeting people at the front doors of church, or handing out bulletins to our congregation as an usher. Training is provided for all roles! If you'd prefer to help out financially, sign-up to donate *Altar Flowers*! Each month, we need \$50 to cover the cost of our beautiful sanctuary flowers. Sign-up to cover half, or all of the cost! All sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board outside the Cozy Corner, sign-up today!

Next Meeting: Thurs., January 12th 2:30pm

# LECTIONARY PAGE

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Bible Study</b>	<b>Sermon</b>
Isaiah 63:7-9 Psalm 148 Hebrews 2:10-18 Matthew 2:13-13	December 27th	January 1st ~Epiphany Sunday~
Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13-17	January 3rd	January 8th ~First Sunday After the Epiphany~
Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-11 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-42	January 10th	January 15th ~Second Sunday After the Epiphany~
Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1, 4-9 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-23	January 17th	January 22nd ~Third Sunday After the Epiphany~
Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12	*January 26th*	January 29th ~Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany~
Isaiah 58:1-9a Psalm 112:1-9 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 Matthew 5:13-20	January 31st	February 5th ~Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany~

## CHURCH COUNCIL



This year's **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 29th, immediately following worship. The **2022 Annual Report** will be available by January 15th for your review. This will include the budget for 2023, the end of the year accounting for 2022, and the list of Church Leadership positions on Council and Ministry Boards, which will be voted on at the meeting on January 29th.

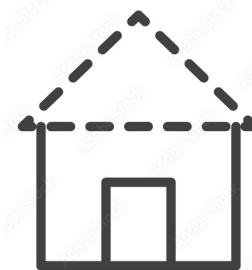
## LEADERSHIP RETREAT

After the Congregational Meeting, the Church Council will gather for a **Church Leadership and Planning Retreat**. All Ministry Board Meetings and Church Council Meetings are open to church members, so if you'd like to be apart of our Church Leadership and Planning Retreat, please let incoming Council President Rick Caudill know.

Next Meeting: Thurs., January 19th 5:45pm

## BOARD OF PROPERTY AND FINANCE

It is a new year with new wishes and new projects. We are energized and empowered to tackle all the projects and issues that come before us. We are here to serve. Just let us know what you would like to see happening at the church.



After several delays, mostly due to the unavailability of materials, the work on our **roof** is expected to begin this month. Since the roofing tiles are still in very good condition, they will be removed, saved and then replaced once all the other preliminary work is completed. The roof structure will be inspected for any weaknesses and will be remedied. New underlayment will be laid, new metal flashing installed, and any other problems will be corrected. The work is expected to last the entire month. We pray for warm and productive weather and for the safety of all the workers.



The **organ pipe chamber** has been repaired, and the pipes have been cleaned, repaired and replaced as needed. A final tuning was performed and the organ sounds better than ever. There are a few additional minor problems that were discovered during the restoration and they will be addressed in the very near future. Many thanks to TriState Organ Repair for the expert work.



The 2023 budget, now known as our **Ministry Spending Plan**, has been prepared and approved by the Church Council and will be presented to the congregation for review and approval at our Annual Meeting this month. We

appreciate the work that all the boards have done to develop their financial needs for the coming year.



**SERENDIPITY**  
Learning Center

Rev. Torie has graciously offered her office space as an expansion room for **Serendipity Early Learning Center** for next school year. We have a team that will be looking at options for relocating Rev. Torie's office, and your suggestions would be helpful. Just let Gary Kurtz or Haven Reardon know your thoughts. Thanks.



As you have undoubtedly noticed, 85% of our membership is over the age of 60. How can we modify use of our building to better serve that population? In other words, with the space we have, are there any new programs, services or activities that would be of interest to them? For example, what about a senior

work out space? Crafting space? Bingo? How can we use the space that God has given us to minister to our congregation. Start thinking about that and let us know what you think would benefit that group.



We are truly thankful for all our blessings, and we wish each and every one a very happy, productive, enjoyable, active, gracious, healthy, glorious and blessed New Year!

Next Meeting: Tues., January 10th 5pm

## MEN'S GROUP



On Fat Tuesday, February 21st from 5:00pm-6:00pm the Men's Group will be hosting a **Pancake Dinner** in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us at St.

John for some free food and fellowship!



Our new Faith & Fun Series will be held on Sunday, February 26th from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Rev. Carl Robinson will be presenting on the four gospels. Stick around after worship for some food, fun and games!



Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 11th! The Annual German Heritage Dinner is back this year to support the Bob Christophel Memorial Scholarship. Come to the Fellowship Hall from 5:00pm-7:00pm for great food and German dancers!

Next Meeting: Sun., January 29th 11am

## **\*\*IN MEMORIAM\*\***

Our Sister-In-Christ, **Ruthie Sanders**, passed just a few days before Christmas. While she had been diagnosed with stage four kidney failure, her death came as a shock to us all. In a way, Ruthie is a perfect example of the love of Christ in action here at St. John UCC. Ruthie came to us probably 10 years ago, seeking out a hot meal at our Community Kitchen. Blossoming in to warm welcome she received as a participant in the meal, Ruthie asked if she could help in the serving, and for several years was responsible for the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. From there, Ruthie accepted the invitation to join us for worship, and eventually joined the church as a member. With her giving spirit, Ruthie served on the Ministry Board of Deacons and was so proud of being part of such a great church. One of my favorite quotes from Ruthie went something like this: "Rev. Torie, I love this church and the people here. I will be in worship every Sunday, because it's important, and I love this church. And the music is great. And I'll only miss church if I'm in the hospital!"

I don't want to make Ruthie out to be a perfect saint, because like all of us, she had her moments. She could be harsh and demanding, she could rub you the wrong way, she had her moments! But in a life that can probably only be described as 'hard', the time that Ruthie spent here at St. John UCC as a member of our family of Faith brought a bit of light to the darkness. Light into her life for sure, and then this light rekindled the Christ-light in her and she was able to shine forth that holy light to others.

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I LOVE THIS CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE HERE. I WILL BE IN WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY, BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT, AND I LOVE THIS CHURCH.

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Why do I take time to give Ruthie's eulogy here? Because I don't know when we will have her memorial service (but we will) and because for me, Ruthie's journey and connection to this church has been instructional, eye-opening, and soul convicting. Who else do we know in this community, even in our own family of faith, who has a hard

life? Who needs the light of Christ and the love of a family of faith? Ruthie's death, while sad and tragic for those left behind, released Ruthie from the sorrows of this life and enabled her to sing with the heavenly choir at Christmas, and every day. And part of that song, I would think, would be a song of thanksgiving, for the blessing that this church was to her.

Who else needs to be blessed by this church. And who else might be the one to bring this church some blessings? Please, keep your eyes and your heart open, and share that light of Christ with everyone you meet.

Because we don't know who needs this church in their life, nor do we know who we need. Amen.

## **MEMORIAL SERVICE: JANUARY 15TH, 2PM @ ST. JOHN UCC - READING**

I wrote these thoughts before I knew when Ruthie's service would be, and you'll probably hear them again on January 15th. But in the meantime, I wanted to pay tribute to one of our church members, and highlight how important YOU and this church were to her. -Rev. Torie

## **PHOTOS FROM DECEMBER**



## **St. John United Church of Christ Regular Events**

### Weekly Events:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Handbell Choir Practice	Sunday	9:00am	Sanctuary
Worship	Sunday	10:00am	Sanctuary
Bible Study Afternoon	Tuesday	1:00pm	Bible Study Room
Bible Study Evening	Tuesday	6:30pm	Mt. View Terrace
Chancel Choir Practice	Wednesday	6:15pm	Choir Room
Feed My Sheep	Thursday	4:30pm	Outside

### Monthly Events:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Communion	1st Sunday	10:00am	Sanctuary
Board of Deacons	1st Sunday	11:00am	Cozy Corner
Pizza Path	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various Locations
Men's Group	Various Sundays	6:00pm	Various Locations
Missionary Sewing	1st Wednesday	10:00am	Fellowship Hall
Board of Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5:00pm	Fellowship Hall
Board of Christian Nurture	2nd Wednesday	5:00pm	Fellowship Hall
Board of Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	3rd Thursday	2:00pm	The Read's
Church Council	3rd Thursday	5:45pm	Fellowship Hall
Work-ship Day	Last Saturday	8:00am	Church

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## **January Birthdays and Anniversaries**

### Birthdays:

January 9 - Don Apking

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



### Anniversaries:

January 10 - Joe & Amy Clay



# New Year's Word Search

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

BABY	FAMILY	RESOLUTION
BALL	FRIENDS	TOAST
CALENDAR	HAPPY	
CELEBRATION	JANUARY	
CLOCK	MIDNIGHT	
CONFETTI	NEW YEAR	
COUNTDOWN	NOISEMAKER	
EVE	PARTY	

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