



“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”

— Luke 7:27b

Beloved Church Family,

The holidays are a time spent with those nearest and dearest to us. Sadly, those nearest to our hearts aren't always nearest to us geographically, and so for many of us, that means that the holidays are also a time spent travelling. For some, this means simply travelling a few minutes or a few hours, but for others, it means travelling across several states and spending hours in the car or on an airplane.

For those who choose to travel, the destination is the main focal point. Whenever we hear that someone is heading out of town, the most common question is “Where are you going?” It seems almost silly to inquire about where their travels will take them along the way because the destination is the main reason they're going. However, many of the most memorable moments from a trip come from the journey itself – especially if the journey includes large amounts of time and distance. These memorable moments might be filled with delight or frustration, but they are memorable, nonetheless.

Every year during the season of Advent, we go on a journey that takes us to Bethlehem, to a manger, and to the birth of a very special baby boy. The destination of Christmas is the “reason for the season”, but this year, we will also be paying close attention to the places where events happened along the way that led to that beautiful, starry night. Alongside our advent travels, we will also be pondering our own journeys in life and seeing what progress and potholes we've experienced along the way.

Our Advent(ure) follows the road through Rome, Jerusalem, and Nazareth, to Bethlehem, the Manger, and ultimately Persia. This series of destinations has been highlighted by author, Rob Fuquay, in his book, an Advent study named, “On the Way to Bethlehem”.

Our Advent Itinerary

December 1:

- We Travel to Rome: A Place of Longing
- Here, we light the candle of Hope.

December 8:

- We Travel to Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting
- Here, we light the candle of Peace.

December 15:

- We Travel to Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity
- Here, we light the candle of Joy.

December 22:

- We Travel to Bethlehem: A Place of Humility
- Here, we light the candle of Love.
- We will hold our Brown Bag Christmas Pageant.

Christmas Eve:

- We Travel to the Manger: A Place of Care
- Here, we light the Christ Candle.

December 29:

- We Travel to Persia: A Place of Return
- Here, we will receive ‘Star Words’ to guide us in the year ahead.



As we set out on this journey together, let us begin with this prayer by the author, Rob Fuquay. May his words, the Holy Spirit, the wisdom of scripture, and the God of miracles and new beginnings guide us this season.

“Dear Lord, may I become more aware this season of the journey of my life. Help me to see and discover you as my Guide. As I make my way to Christmas, may I step aside from the daily destinations of life to consider where my journey is ultimately taking me and where you want to lead me. Help me to be open to sights and stops you want to show me as I go, so that when I arrive at Christmas, I will be at a new starting point of my journey. Amen.”

✝️❤️✝️❤️ *With Hope, Peace, Joy and Love* Pastor Christy ✝️❤️✝️❤️

Advent Fund Drive for the Snack Pack Program

This Advent Season, you are invited, once again, to help us feed the children of Clinton County by giving to our fund drive for the Clinton County Snack Pack program, which is run by our sister in Christ, and member of St. John UCC, Jenn Thompson. Her ministry helps to **feed 197 children** in Clinton County schools each weekend during the school year. These children receive free or reduced-price lunches through school during the week but are left without resources on the weekend. To help fill this hunger gap, the Snack Pack Program steps in and delivers shelf stable food that is either fully ready to eat or is simple enough for kids to prepare.

This vital ministry is not inexpensive. **It costs \$17 each month to feed one child** on the weekends, so it costs **\$170 to feed one child for the 10 months of the whole school year**. Total cost for the current students for this school year is \$33,490.

To help meet this need, **St. John UCC is setting a goal to raise enough funds to sponsor 10 children (plus)** for an entire school year. Last year we exceeded our goal so this year we have set a new goal to raise **\$2,000** for the Snack Pack Program. To keep track of our progress each week, we will have a poster in worship with a Christmas Tree printed on it. Each week, we will place an ornament sticker on the tree for every \$20 dollars we've raised. Our goal is to have 100 ornaments on the tree by Christmas Day. **We have our special gift box (see picture) next to our normal offering plate to receive your donations for this Fund Drive. Please make any checks out to St. John UCC and write Snack Pack in the memo line.**



Together, we have the ability, the faith, and the heart to make a huge difference in the lives of 10+ children – God’s children – in our community. I’m excited to see how we rise to this challenge and meet our goal together!



St. John Prayer List

Chris Bates	Tish Bates	Lois & Stan Clark	Greg Erdmann
Cathy Haller	Denise Hamilton	Pauline Kraemer	Mary Lou Lurtz
Marian Nelson	Lonna Patton	Billie Rinderer	Orville Rinderer
Rogers Family	Lois Winkler	Connie Zimmers	

Elaine Dupuis	(Mickey & Mike Williamson's friend)
Ken Erdmann	(Greg Erdmann's brother)
Ken Fritz	(Cathy Haller's brother)
Richard Haller	(Cathy Haller's brother-in-law)
Angie Jones	(Pehg Zeller's friend)
Kurt Joseph	(Pastor Christy's friend)
Wendy Patterson	(Pastor Christy's cousin)
Tammy Press	(Marian Funk's niece)
Gary & Carol Weshinsky	(Laura Wesselmann's father & mother)



Pastor Christy is usually in the office Tuesday - Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM but will make appointments if needed. Contact her by calling her cell phone at 618-973-3040. Beverly Adams, office administrator, will usually be in the office 9 AM to 3 PM, Monday through Friday, but her schedule may vary. Contact her at stjohntrenton@gmail.com or call 224-9828.

DECEMBER Birthdays



Randy Rinderer December 1
Jamie Truscott December 1
Scott Mohme December 3
Cory Williamson December 8
Jordan Groennert December 8
Evan Bair December 8
Matthew Koentz December 15

James Gilomen December 19
Nathan Kunz December 19
Charlie Bair December 20
Liam Feldmann December 26
Gary Schwend December 31
Hank Henderson December 31

DECEMBER Anniversaries

Karen & Frank Kunz December 2
Maggie & Adam Gerstner December 5
Ron & Kimberly Tremmel December 5

Brandy & Jerry Sells December 7
Tim & Kassie Fisher December 21
Mary Lou & Del Lurtz December 30



DECEMBER COUNCIL MEMBER

Elaine Hoffmann & Hank Henderson



Virtual Worship Services

Virtual services continue for those wishing to attend. We want to make worship as convenient as possible for our members and the community. Please see our website or our Facebook page for the Zoom link.

- To call in with phone audio only, call
- **1-312-626-6799** and then the meeting ID:
- **8436488110** followed by the pound sign.
- Password, if needed, will be: **62293**



- *To Hank Henderson for being St. John's representative on the Trenton Council of Churches as its president and taking the time for helping calls and tracking down the Salvation Army kettle*

- *To Kimberly Tremmel and Lana Tobin for volunteering to help in the office while Bev Adams was recovering*
- *To our coffee hour volunteers. When Rev. Don Wagner and Rev. Elmer Bowman were here as guest pastors they were very appreciative of the food and conversation*
- *To everyone for donating to our last-minute call for the Green Bean Food Pantry Thanksgiving baskets. The donations of 50 cans of yams and 37 boxes/bags of stuffing were delivered on Monday, November 18th. Thank you for your generosity for families in Trenton!*
- *To Mike Williamson and Russ Heuberger for their "behind the scenes" work*



APPLESAUCE – YUM!

We are still selling applesauce at \$5 per pint and \$10 per quart. You can pick up and pay on Sunday or on days the office is open (please call ahead to make sure someone will be here).

FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST



The Fellowship Breakfast is the first Tuesday of the month at 8:00 AM at Good Ol' Days in New Baden.

Next breakfast date is Dec. 3.

Come join us for an enjoyable breakfast with others. It's a time for great conversation, food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome!



The church office will be closed on December 25th for Christmas and January 1 for New Year's Day.



BOOK CLUB: Book Club will be December 18th at 1:00 PM. Our chosen book this month is "The Man Who Invented Christmas - How Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol Rescued His Career and Revived Our Holiday Spirits." Please join us!



POINSETTIA ORDERS

Help decorate the church by purchasing red poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one. Price will be \$9.00 per plant. Checks can be made out to St. John UCC with "poinsettia" in the memo. Order forms are in this newsletter and also in the narthex. **Please place your order by Sunday, December 1.**



OFFICE NEWS: Beverly Adams would like to thank all of the St. John family for their prayers, good wishes and cards for her recent surgery which went perfectly.

Recovery was uneventful so she has returned to the office. She will have another 2-day time off for a procedure on December 5th with recovery on the 6th, but expects to be back in the office on December 9th.

♥♥♥♥ Women's J.O.Y. Fellowship ♥♥♥♥



A request has come from Kindercottage for our traditional "Pajamas for the Kids." The kids get presents from other churches but we always give pj's so they can go to bed the night before Christmas and wake up in new pajamas in time to greet Christmas Day. **Our delivery day for the pajamas will be December 18.** Boys and girls sizes 18 months to 6X are needed this year. We deliver them the week before so there is time for them to be sorted and sent home. Let the generous spirit of Christmas guide you as you consider this worthy mission. Thank you once again for your generosity.

The JOY will pack cookies for shut-ins on Tuesday, December 17, at 1:00. The JOY ladies are a small group and need some help with baking this year. If you can send a dozen or two of your favorite cookies it will make the cookie containers more diverse as well as delicious. Cookies can be brought on Sunday, December 15, and dropped off in the vestibule Monday, the 16th and on Tuesday morning until 1:00. Thank you for your help in spreading the Christmas spirit.



Advent Begins

December 1st is the start of Advent when we ask members and their families to help with the lighting of the Advent candles. If you want to participate, please use the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

- Dates for lighting: December 1 (Hope), 1 candle
- December 8 (Peace), 2 candles
- December 15 (Joy), 3 candles
- December 22 (Love), 4 candles
- December 24 (Christ), 5 candles.



Salvation Army Bell Ringing



The Trenton Council of Churches is asking for bell ringers for the Salvation Army at the Trenton IGA. St. John has two days again this year: *Tuesday, December 3rd and Wednesday, December 4th from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM both days.* Please sign up for a 1 or 2 hour shift (or team up with a buddy and split it for 1 ½ hours each) on the Bell Ringing sheet in the narthex. We appreciate any and all help. Thank you!

GREEN BEAN PANTRY DONATIONS

Donations that are collected for the Green Bean Pantry are taken to West Gate **on the 1st Wednesday of the month** by Pastor Christy, which will be December 4th. The Pantry donation box is in the narthex under the quilt rack. If you wish to drop off donations on Tuesdays when the vestibule is open, please make sure you mark that they are for the food pantry. Thank you for thinking of others!



Rainbow Preschool News

Happy Thanksgiving!

As I sit here and write this newsletter, I can't believe how fast the month has flown by!

Our students have had a busy month of learning. We celebrated Veteran's Day and had the day off to celebrate and honor all the men and women who serve and have served to protect our freedom and our country. In honor of Veteran's Day, we read the story "A Yellow Ribbon for Daddy", colored the American flag, made a heart using red, white, and blue



construction paper to honor our Veterans, painted a poppy flower, and made a red, white, and blue star bracelet.



We also discussed why we celebrate Thanksgiving, and students told us all the things they are thankful for. Students completed a thankful turkey, a turkey crown, and a few other Thanksgiving projects.

Our MWF students have been learning their addresses and telephone numbers, identifying, and writing letters of the alphabet, and writing their numbers from 1-20, learning beginning and ending sounds, and syllables.

Our TU/TH students have been busy learning to write their names, identifying the letters of the alphabet and numbers 1-15. Both classes continue to work hard on learning shapes, the sounds that each letter makes, and so much more.



Pastor Christy came in and read the story "God Gave Us Thankful Hearts." Both classes really enjoyed the story and listened very well and told us all what they are thankful for.



We had our second share day of the year. We asked each of the students to bring in or draw a picture of their families to share with their classmates. Everyone did a good job listening and were very patient when their classmates shared their pictures.

Happy November Birthday to the following Bailey S. on November 11th, Remi K. on November 12th and Ms. Misty on November 22nd.

A few reminders

- ✓ -Please make sure your child has a warm jacket, hat, and mittens. Weather permitting; we will continue to go outside.
- ✓ -December tuition is due Thursday December 5th and Friday December 6th.
- ✓ - Christmas break starts Monday December 23rd to January 3rd. Classes resume Monday January 6th and Tuesday January 7th.

We are looking forward to another great month of fun and learning!

Misty



CHRISTMAS FUND

Thanks to your generosity, last year the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.9 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired church servants and their families. Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving others

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Please consider a donation to this fund. We will be accepting donations on Sunday, December 22nd.

5TH SUNDAY OFFERING

We will be collecting for Our Church's Wider Mission on Sunday, December 29th. Donation envelopes will be in the narthex. Donations are also accepted on our website.



OCWM funds the work the United Church of Christ does in its Associations and Conferences (such as our very own Illinois South Conference) and in the national and global church. OCWM funds are invested in programs, resources, and tools needed to keep local UCC churches strong, effective, and growing. Programs and resources such as Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, General Ministries, and Pension Boards.



Wednesday, December 24th

We Travel to the Manger: A Place of Care

Frostbite Fun
2025 Youth Event

If inclement weather causes us to postpone this event, it will be held on February 15th-16th.

January 18th - 19th, 2025

Calling all junior & senior high youth!
Join us as we learn to live out loud
and put our faith in action!!!

2 Ways to Participate
Single Day (\$50): Saturday 10 am to 7 pm
Overnight (\$100): Saturday 10 am to Sunday 11 am

Registration opens on CampWise December 1st.
Registration closes on January 5th.

Each church is responsible for providing the necessary
chaperones for the event.

Questions? Contact Jill Mayer (618) 939-7123

Horseback riding
will be available!

The Illinois South Conference is hosting a youth event at DuBois Center for youth in 6th-12th grade. Pastor Christy and Cora will be going on Saturday, January 18th, and we'd love to have our youth come along, too!

When: Saturday from 10am-7pm;

What: Youth Event focusing on living out loud and putting our faith in action;

Cost: \$50; Horse Riding is available for \$25.

Please let Pastor Christy know if any youth or adult chaperones are interested in participating. We do have a scholarship available for youth to attend if cost is an issue.