



“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning.” –
Lamentations 3:22-23a

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.” –
Psalm 51:1 (NRSVue)

(Jesus said), “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had *mercy* on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” –
Luke 10:36 (NIV)

Beloved Church Family,

Over these last few weeks, there is one word I have heard repeated over and over again – *mercy*. It began at the Inaugural Prayer Breakfast, when Bishop Budde asked the president to “have mercy” on various groups of people who might be afraid. I won’t be going into the substance of her message here, but as I’ve watched the ripples of her sermon move through the theological and political spheres in the days that followed, that word – *mercy* – has stuck with me. What is *mercy*, anyway? What does it mean for us? What (if anything) does it ask of us?

In the Bible, the word *mercy* can be found nearly 350 times, and it’s used in a couple different ways. It can be a descriptor of God’s love for us, a plea to God for forgiveness and pardon, and it can be a directive from God (through the prophets and Jesus) for how we are to interact with one another. Sometimes, it’s also translated as “loving kindness” or “compassion.” These alternate translations give us an idea of what *mercy* is all about.

At its core, *mercy* is about choosing to love someone even if they haven’t “earned” it. It points to a persistent feeling of benevolence towards those who are poor, afflicted, oppressed, or downtrodden. But, it doesn’t stop there. To show *mercy*, one’s feelings of compassion towards those who are suffering must also be linked to the desire to alleviate that suffering AND the choice to work towards their relief, even if you believe they don’t necessarily “deserve” it. As an example – At Jesus’ arrest, Peter cut off the ear of a soldier who came to take Jesus away. Jesus showed *mercy* when he stopped Peter and healed the soldier’s ear. We may feel that the soldier deserved what he got, but Jesus’ compassion and *mercy* moved him to heal what had been hurt.

Mercy, like *grace*, is often counterintuitive through the lens of societies like ours that have built themselves on merit. In our cultural understanding, those who are financially comfortable, healthy, and socially accepted have lived in a way that has merited them that level of living. By contrast, we can sometimes assume that those who are impoverished, sick, and socially outcast have, one way or another, earned that status as well. It is difficult for us to understand the concept of unmerited pardon, unearned forgiveness, and unwarranted compassion. And, it is often hard for us to find compassion for those who, in our eyes, don’t deserve it.

However, God asks us time and time again to share the blessings we have received. We have received such abundant gifts from God – wonderful things like love, forgiveness, hope, life, wisdom, and yes, *mercy*. If we are to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, we must find ways to grow in our ability to receive and share these

many blessings. Therefore, during this month that is so often celebrated as a month of love, I am challenging myself to focus on mercy (one facet of Godly love) for these 28 days, and I invite you to join me. For each week of February, I will be focusing on a different aspect of mercy in my daily prayers, as I attempt to understand the mercy I have received, and to stretch myself in my ability (and willingness) to share mercy with others. I hope you will follow along with me in this spiritual practice.

Week 1 – February 1st-7th

When have I experienced the mercy of God? What did it feel like to receive unmerited mercy?

Week 2 – February 8th-14th

For what choices, actions, or thoughts do I seek God's mercy today?

Week 3 – February 15th-21st

Where do I see mercy being given and received between people today?

Week 4 – February 22nd-28th

What does Jesus' instruction to "Go and do likewise" mean for me specifically? What is one way I can show mercy, loving kindness, and compassion today?

Throughout these next 28 days, may we each feel the healing touch of God's mercy in our lives, and may we each find the strength to share that mercy as readily as we receive it.

*With love and hope,
Pastor Christy*



Mercy

St. John Prayer List

Our Local Church Family

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	Mickey Williamson	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)
Jocelyn Newkirk	(Pehg Zeller's cousin)
Wendy Patterson	(Pastor Christy's cousin)
Gary & Carol Weshinsky	(Laura Wesselmann's father & mother)
Craig & Lori Wheeler	(Kimberly & Ron Tremmel's friend)



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.



FEBRUARY Birthdays

Zach Bugger February 2
Jarrold Tobin February 9
Lois Clark February 16
Orville Rinderer February 17
Billie Rinderer February 18
Kassie Fisher February 20
Greg Erdmann February 25



FEBRUARY Anniversaries



Dorothea & Tom Louden February 11
Marc & Elaine Hoffmann February 17

FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEMBER

Ron Tremmel



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 everyone who put away the Christmas decorations*
- *To Ron Tremmel who made sure the ice and snow was removed from the sidewalks and parking area*
- *To Hank Henderson who worked on the budget to get it to the congregation on time*
- *To those who stayed for the Annual Meeting and helped pass the budget for 2025*
- *To the J.O.Y. who once again stepped up and held a luncheon for the family of Kurt Joseph*



FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST



The Fellowship Breakfast is the first Tuesday of the month at 8:00 AM. We will be switching venues from Good Ol' Days in New Baden to **Hank's Bowl in**

Trenton. We hope you can join us for an enjoyable breakfast with others. It's a time for great conversation, food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome! **Mark your 2025 calendars for these dates: 2/4, 3/4, 4/8, 5/6, 6/3, 7/1, 8/5, 9/2, 10/7, 11/4 & 12/2.**



CONDOLENCES to the family of Kurt Joseph who passed away on January 13, 2025.

Kurt was a good friend of Pastor Christy's and a Celebration of Life was held at St. John UCC on January 26, 2025.

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 The Pantry donation tub 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 pantry. Thank you for thinking of others!

Chili & Soup Drive-Thru Dinner

St. John will have our annual drive-thru chili and soup dinner on Saturday, February 8, 2025 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM for \$10 a quart. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex for those wanting to help. We need help with food preparation on Friday, February 7 at 9:00 AM and on Saturday, February 8 with cooks at 8:00 AM, servers and runners at 10:30 AM and clean up at 2:00 PM. Call the office if you would like to sign up. We appreciate any and all help!



♥♥♥♥ Women's J.O.Y. Fellowship ♥♥♥♥

Kindercottage Trip - Once again the members for St. John have shown their generosity toward the children of Kindercottage with the following donations: 84 rolls of toilet paper, ten boxes of tissue, three bottles of liquid hand soap, a bottle of floor cleaner, two packages of disinfectant wipes, nine rolls of paper towels, four gallons of bleach, four reams of copy paper, six cans of disinfectant spray,

two bottles of disinfectant cleaners, plus some packages of plastic forks and spoons. What a lot of things to pack into one car!!! This should kill a few of the nasty germs that are floating around all school right now. However, just to make sure we get ALL the germs, Kindercottage is requesting that we continue with the disinfectant wipes, paper towels and dish soap for February. Delivery date will be Monday, February 24th. Thank you for always thinking of the kids at Kindercottage.



BOOK CLUB

St. John's Book Club will be meeting on Wednesday, March 12, to discuss their newest pick, *Between Two Kingdoms* by Suleika Jaouad which should be available for check out in the church library this month.



This book is a memoir of a 23 year old correspondent who became ill with leukemia. She spent four years fighting for her life and chronicling the saga in a column for The New York Times. After treatments, she realized that she had no idea how to live. How does someone reenter the world, reclaim what was lost and live again? Jaouad embarked, with her dog, Oscar, on a 100-day, 15,000-mile road trip across the country to meet strangers who had written to her during her years in the hospital: a teenage girl in Florida also recovering from cancer; a teacher in California grieving the death of her son; a death-row inmate in Texas who'd spent his own years confined to a room. She learned that the divide between sick and well is porous, that many of us will travel back and forth between these realms throughout our lives. "Between Two Kingdoms" is a story of survivorship and what it means to begin again.

Rummage Sale News

Save the dates of March 27-29 when St. John UCC will be having our spring rummage sale. We are currently asking for donations which you can bring by and put in the church vestibule each Tuesday and Thursday between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. If you have items to donate, please bring them by. Bring your clean and serviceable books, household items, clothes, bedding, knick-knacks, decorations, toys and drop them off in the vestibule (no large items at this time and please no weapons or ammunition). Let your friends and family know that we are looking for items as it helps to have a variety - especially children's clothing. Sorting will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 until 3 PM until March 26th.



DuBois Center

On Saturday, March 1 DuBois Center will be having a "Service Saturday" spring clean up. Possible projects include splitting and stacking wood, weeding and mulching the labyrinth, moving bunk beds and working on program installations. They will provide lunch for all who come! Pastor Christy will be going and would love to have a carpool or caravan down to DuBois. If you are interested in riding with her, just let her know.

Rainbow Preschool News

As I sit here and write this I can't believe how quickly January has come and gone. We finally welcomed our students back from Christmas break and snow days. When students returned they shared their stories of what they did, what they got for Christmas, and how much fun they had playing

out in the snow with their families. I would like to thank Pehg Zeller for coming in to help Ms. Lisa while I was out with the flu earlier in the month.

Pastor Christy came in and read *The Legend of Old Befana* and *Extra Yarn*. Students loved both stories and discussed what they liked most about the book and shared what they got for Christmas with Pastor Christy. Our MWF students have been working on writing their names, addresses, telephone numbers, and birthdays. They continue to work on writing their uppercase and lowercase letters and writing numbers from 1-30. They have also completed numerous alphabet, color by number, cutting, and many more projects for the month of January. Our Tu/Th students have been working hard on writing their names and learning their birthdays. In addition to identifying uppercase letters and numbers from 1-15. They have completed many alphabet, color by number, cutting and other projects for the month.

By the time you read this we will have already completed the first week of the alphabet box. Each week students are asked to bring/draw something that starts with the letter we are working on for the week. We will share what the students brought in with their classmates.

We would like to welcome Kinsley E. to the MWF class and Wrenleigh R. to the TU/TH class. Happy January birthdays to the following students Steven B.R. January 2nd, Warner K. January 4th, and Ivrey B. on January 21st. Each student brought in their favorite snack to share with their classmates to celebrate their birthday.

We are currently enrolling students for the 2025-2026 school year. If you know anyone that is interested or looking for a preschool, please have them reach out by sending us an email at rainbowpreschooltrentonil@gmail.com or by calling the office.

If you would like to see what our students have been doing in class please check out our Facebook page for daily updates.

♥♥♥♥♥ Reminders for February ♥♥♥♥♥

♥ -Please make sure your child has a warm coat, gloves/mittens, and hat. Weather permitting, we will go outside.

♥ **-Snow days-** If Wesclin school district cancels school due to the weather, Rainbow will be closed as well. When looking for the school closure on the news it will be listed as Wesclin school district. You will be notified by email and/or by text, Reminder app, and it will be posted on our facebook page as well.

♥ - We try our best to do what Wesclin school district does, but if we feel that it is necessary to cancel before Wesclin does the Preschool board and I will meet to discuss what we should do. Once a decision has been made parents will be notified via email, reminder app, and a post will be made on our facebook page.

♥ -Wednesday February 12th and Thursday February 13th- Valentine's party

♥ -No school Friday February 14th-Teacher Institute

♥ -No School Monday February 17th- President's Day

♥ -If you have not returned your enrollment form for the 2025-2026 school year, please do so as soon as possible.

♥ -I will be contacting RMS studios to set up a date for pictures.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me.

Happy Valentine's Day! Ms. Misty

