



Beloved Church Family,

A few weeks ago, our church received a letter from our conference's Finance Ministry Team (FMT). In this letter, the FMT talked about the significant drop in our conference's support of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) this year, and how that has affected the budget. They acknowledged that budget struggles are something many churches and households are dealing with in recent years, but they also appealed to the congregations of Illinois South to prayerfully consider giving what we can to help bridge the budget gap.

At St. John, we are not strangers to conversations about budget deficits, and we join many other churches throughout our conference and across the country in the search for ways to navigate these financial challenges. It is hard to know how best to faithfully navigate the question of stewardship and giving in the midst of uncertain times, but I have been heartened that even in the midst of these struggles, our congregation continues to be "5 for 5" – meaning the people of St. John give financially to all five national funds each year. We may not be able to give as much as we did in years past, but the fact that we have been dedicated to giving what we can is a testament to the heart of this congregation. These offerings, given in covenant love, are a blessing - both a financial blessing to the wider church, and a blessing to our own spirits and our covenant relationship. So, thank you for the ways you continue to support our ministries throughout the United Church of Christ.

In addition to thanking each of you for your continued support, I thought this month's newsletter would be a great opportunity to remind ourselves of what these offerings support – especially Our Church's Wider Mission, which was the focus of the letter we received from FMT. OCWM is the only one of the "5 for 5" offerings that isn't collected on a specific day each year. Instead, it's collected at-will throughout the calendar



year and earmarked for certain 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday offerings. There isn't as much information published each year about how our OCWM offerings are put to use, so it's easy (even for pastors and other church leaders) to forget how important this fund is. In short, this money is the "general support" we offer to help keep our Illinois South Conference and our National Office running. However, the vast majority of this

stays right here in Illinois South. 80 cents of every dollar given to OCWM goes straight to our own Illinois South Conference Office to help pay for the ministries and services offered here to our own local churches and pastors. This general support allows the conference to do many things, including assisting churches during the search and call process when they are looking for their next pastor, coordinating local mission and relief efforts, equipping and nurturing faith leaders, and providing outdoor ministry opportunities through DuBois Center. The other 20 cents goes to the National Church Office to help fund the ministry and services offered there.

The other four of the "5 for 5" offerings are spread throughout the year and are collected during different seasons of the church year. The first offering is taken during Lent, and it's known as One Great Hour of Sharing. This fund helps channel resources for international programs in health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and



domestic disaster response, administered by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources. When you give to this offering, you are covenanting with people throughout our denomination to care for God’s people throughout the world.

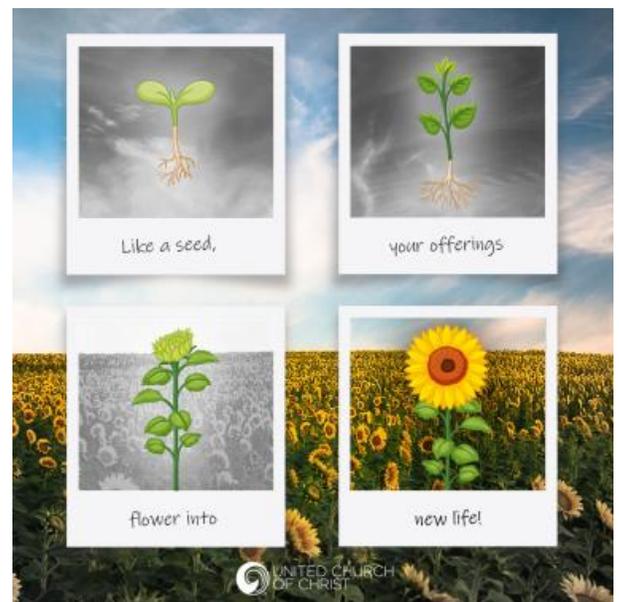
The second national offering takes place on Pentecost – the day the church was born and we received the Holy Spirit. It is fitting that it is called Strengthen the Church, for that is exactly what it aims to do. Through this offering, we join in reimagining and building the future of our denomination, the United Church of Christ – on both conference and national levels. The majority of Strengthen the Church funds support youth ministries and equipping full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the United Church of Christ does not have a strong presence yet. It also provides support for new initiatives in churches that are already established in the UCC.

The third national offering is received in the fall when we celebrate World Communion Sunday, and it is known as Neighbors in Need. This fund helps to support ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. This includes direct service projects through Justice and Local Church Ministries, initiatives pertaining to justice and advocacy, and the work of the Council for American Indian Ministries. Neighbors in Need does exactly what it says – and it helps us live into Christ’s commandment to love our neighbors.

And last but not least, the fourth national offering, known as the Christmas Fund, is taken on Christmas Eve every year. It is also known under the names, The Veterans of the Cross and The Emergency Fund, and it is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. These funds provide direct support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the supplementation of small annuities or health premiums, as well as emergency grants, and/or Christmas “Thank You” gift checks. This offering is a special way for the congregations of the United Church of Christ to help give back to the leaders who have given so much for us over the years.

And there we have it – all five national offerings of the UCC – Our Church’s Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund. These are the ways in which our local church donations are blessed and expanded to help provide services and programs throughout our conference, our country, and the world. Thank you for continuing to covenant with me and with our whole congregation to faithfully support these ministries and be a “5 for 5” church. And, as always, thank you for the countless ways you continue to live out your faith and bless this community through our congregation in Trenton. May God bless each and every one of you and may God bless St. John UCC.

*With love and hope,  
Pastor Christy*



## St. John Prayer List

### **Our Local Church Family**

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

### **Our Extended Friends & Family**

Elaine Dupuis	(Mike Williamson's friend)
Ken Erdmann	(Greg Erdmann's brother)
Ken Fritz	(Cathy Haller's brother)
Richard Haller	(Cathy Haller's brother-in-law)
Sylvia Hoerchler	(Curt Wesselmann's aunt)
Wendy Patterson	(Pastor Christy's cousin)
Michelle Toennies	(Deb and Dan Athmer's niece)
Gary & Carol Weshinsky	(Laura Wesselmann's father & mother)
Craig & Lori Wheeler	(Kimberly & Ron Tremmel's friends)
Dean Zurliene	(Curt Wesselmann's uncle)



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](mailto:stjohntrenton@gmail.com) or call 224-9828.



<b>Shane Nollau</b> July 2	<b>Ollie Bair</b> July 20
<b>Jo Ann Turner</b> July 3	<b>Eli Truscott</b> July 23
<b>Barbara Szpila</b> July 5	<b>Diane Marsh</b> July 24
<b>Taylor Fisher</b> July 7	<b>Cathy Ostrander-Biggs</b> July 27
<b>Lois Winkler</b> July 15	<b>Kim Nollau</b> July 28
<b>Margie Bopp</b> July 18	<b>Shirley Niggli</b> July 15
<b>Clinton Truscott</b> July 18	<b>Collins Gerstner</b> July 31



**Hank & Laurie Henderson** July 15  
**Dan & Lauren Holloway** July 20  
**Gary & Carol Schwend** July 29



**JULY COUNCIL MEMBER**

Billie Rinderer



# 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 helped with VBS last month*
- *To all who signed up to help with the Brown Bag Lunch Program*

## PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Christy will be out of town for General Synod from July 10<sup>th</sup>

through July 16<sup>th</sup> and will be back in the office on July 17<sup>th</sup>. If you have any pastoral emergencies, please call the office at 224-9828 between 9 AM and 3 PM or Ron Tremmel at 224-7004 during non-office hours so we may contact a UCC minister to assist you.



Beverly Adams will be out of the office July 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> for vacation. However, Pastor Christy will be in the office for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and the office will be closed on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## 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!



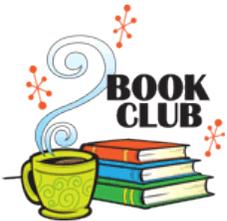
## GREETING CARDS

Don't forget to sign the greeting cards in the vestibule when you come to worship service on Sundays. The Sunshine Ministry appreciates your help in keeping connected with members.



## Rainbow Preschool News

We are still enrolling students in our Monday/Wednesday/Friday program for children ages 4-5 and our Tuesday/Thursday program for children ages 3-4. If you know anyone who would be interested, please have them contact Misty Straeter via email at [rainbowpreschooltrentonil@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowpreschooltrentonil@gmail.com), the Rainbow Preschool Facebook page or by calling the office at 618-224-9828. Our returning students and new students will receive an email in July regarding open house dates and information regarding the 2025-2026 school year.



Our next book is "The Women" a novel by Kristen Hannah. A story of a young Army Corps nurse during the Vietnam war, as she experiences wartime trauma and political upheaval in the 1960s. This book is available for checkout in the church library. A date will be announced for the next book club meeting.

 *Women's J.O.Y. Fellowship* 

During the summer we are asking for school supplies. Anything your children or grandchildren need at school is needed by the kids at Kindercottage. The vestibule will be open for donations on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting July 1 which will also coincide with the set up for the next Rummage Sale. It has been a generous year of giving toward the children who rely on Kindercottage for preschool, day care, and a safe place before and after school.

## BROWN BAG LUNCH PROGRAM

The Brown Bag Lunch program is every Tuesday, at 10:30 AM and will go through August 12. For this program we supply a meat and cheese sandwich, a bag of chips, a drink, a fruit or veggie, and a sweet treat. We also pack a little something as a reminder that the children are loved by Jesus and by our congregation. After the lunches are packed, they are delivered to Base 215 for distribution. Thank you to everyone who signed up to help. You will be called the day before with the number of lunches we are packing the following morning. If you did not sign up to supply a sweet treat, don't worry, there will be treats on hand. The church does receive a reimbursement grant, but it is not going to cover all the cost this summer. If you would like to donate monetarily, donations can be sent to the office or placed in the collection plate and marked BROWN BAG LUNCHES. Thank you!

## Rummage Sale News

Save the dates of September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> when St. John UCC will be having our fall rummage sale. We are currently asking for donations which you can bring by and put in the church vestibule each Tuesday and Thursday between 10:00 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 starting July 8<sup>th</sup> until September 4<sup>th</sup>. Any and all help is appreciated as your time and energy is valuable to us!



***The church office will be closed on Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup> in observance of our national holiday.***



# Hope

by [Quinn G. Caldwell](#)

published on Jun 30, 2025 at <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/hope/>

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-19. Then read the devotional, “Hope.”
2. Have you ever needed to act in hope even when you didn’t feel hopeful?
3. Which seems more likely to you: that you can act your way into hoping, or hope your way into acting? What do you think God thinks?
4. Is it dishonest to act lovingly even when you don’t feel love? How about hope? Should we always act the way we feel?

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you came to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you. – Ephesians 1:17-18 (NRSV)*

“Lost it all,” he said, showing us pictures of what his single-story house looked like before and after Hurricane Katrina filled it with 7 feet of water. “No insurance, no nothing.” We were standing in the driveway, taking a break from the work we were doing with Back Bay Mission to rehab his house, which still hadn’t fully recovered 20 years after the storm.

He showed us pictures of the tent full of donated possessions in the yard. He and his family had lived in it for months after the storm, his in-laws’ generator hooked up to a heater in the winter and a fan in the summer.

At every wedding I’ve ever done, I’ve preached some version of the same sermon: love is more important as a verb than as a feeling. The noun is great, I say, but it will be the verb—love as a series of actions—that will matter in the long run. Of course that’s not only true of marriages, and of course it’s not only true of love.

Wondering at what it must have taken to live in a tent for months while his house was slowly gutted and then sort-of fixed, wondering why he didn’t just cut and run, one of us said, “You must have had so much hope to get you through that.”

“What?” he said, incredulous. “No, sir. I didn’t feel any hope at all. But my kids were watching, so I had to act like I did.”

## Prayer

For myself, for the kids, for the world, let me act out hope until I start feeling it. Amen.

## About the Author

Quinn G. Caldwell is Chaplain of the Protestant Cooperative Ministry at Cornell University. His most recent book is a series of daily reflections for Advent and Christmas called [All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas](#). Learn more about it and find him on Facebook at Quinn G. Caldwell.

