

Joy of ST. JOHN'S

United Center for Caring

A NEW LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

The United Center for Caring was formed in 2002 as an outreach of St. John's UCC. As a 501(c)3, the United Center is eligible to apply for and receive grant funds that are not available to religious organizations like churches. For the past several years the United Center has received funding for the Food Pantry.

The purpose of the United Center is to develop, provide, encourage and support care services and cooperate with other concerned organizations to enhance the lives of children, families and individuals in the greater Jackson area. The current board members are Allen Schroeder, Miriam Brown-Dorsey, Carl Robinson, Harry Wilson, Cheryl George and Pastor Judy Goodrow.

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Baby Shower Update

SEPTEMBER 24 & 25

The 15th annual Community Baby Shower will be held on two days this year: Friday and Saturday, September 24 and 25.

We have 85 moms registered! This year we purchased yard signs to place outside St. John's and around the community. Due to COVID recommendations, the participants will attend in four groups:
 Friday 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
 Saturday 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Eighteen volunteers are needed to set up and staff the event. If you are available to help, please contact Donna Benedict or call the church office.



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St. John's United Church of Christ

We are an Open and Affirming, LGBT-friendly faith family in the heart of downtown Jackson, Michigan.

St. John's welcomes all! We are an inclusive family of faith that reaches up, reaches in, and reaches out. We are on a journey of spiritual transformation that ripples out into our community.

Join us for worship! We gather every Sunday at 10:15am. Service begins at 10:30am.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



This picture shows our new website. Our site now ranks #1 on most search engines for "LGBT friendly church in Jackson MI"! We are continuing our efforts to make St. John's United Church of Christ as accessible as possible to spiritual seekers in the Jackson area.

From the Pastor's Screen

LET'S HAVE FUN!

How fun are you? What do you do for fun?

At a recent Elders Meeting we talked about raising the energy level in our church by having F.U.N! Sadly, COVID restrictions have stolen some of our fun-ness, but St. John's can once again be a place of joy! How?

- F. Let's be Friendly!
- U. Let's be United!
- N. Let's be Nimble!

Friendly

When I first visited St. John's in March of this year I was overwhelmed by the welcome I received. Everyone was so friendly! Of course, most of you were at home visiting with me via Zoom, but I felt embraced by the warmth and the undercurrent of love that runs deep in this faith family. However, others have shared that was not their experience here. They felt a little awkward, not sure who to talk to and where to sit at coffee hour. During the next several weeks, if you feel safe doing so, talk to someone at worship that you haven't spoken with in a while -- especially those outside your social circle. And smile!

United

During the past several weeks I feel an increasing sense of trust developing as many of you share your dreams, hopes and fears for the life of St. John's UCC. Thank you to those who felt safe enough to openly discuss sensitive topics with me. These

shared thoughts have revealed a deep divide between those who embrace change and those who want St. John's to stay the same -- or even go back in time. We will be intentionally creating bridges between these two groups. Jesus told us that a house divided cannot stand. I trust that we will all follow the Holy Spirit's guidance -- and not our own will.

Nimble

"Jack be nimble, Jack be quick..."
When COVID first appeared, St. John's was both nimble and quick: Zoom was explored and embraced as a vehicle to keep us connected in worship. It was different. It was weird. It was difficult learning how to play a new game -- but you did it! -- and the faith family stayed connected during a pandemic. Now, I am asking you to once again be nimble! Be quick! We'll be trying out some new ideas during worship and during the week. We'll be changing the Order of Worship. We'll be singing again -- masks required! We'll have a book study group and LGBTQ+ game night. If you're a bicyclist, the Holy Spokes will be riding together. If any of these new ideas work, we'll keep doing it! If it doesn't, we'll scrap that idea and try another.

Dear ones, we are at a crossroad. We can continue to coast -- straight downhill, landing in a heap at the bottom. Or we can start to peddle -- we can climb this hill together and enjoy the view from the top. But we must decide (yes, decide) to be friendly to ALL. We must set our hearts on the "forgive" setting and unite as a family of faith. And we must be nimble -- we must be willing to try new things. Let's be FUN! Let's have FUN! We can do it together.

With Joy, Pastor Judy

"AND IF A HOUSE BE
DIVIDED AGAINST
ITSELF, THAT HOUSE
CANNOT STAND."

MARK 3:25 KJV



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Image by Jeevan Singla from Pixabay

September Birthdays

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

- 01 - Russell Church
- 01 - Michael Glance
- 02 - Elizabeth Horsley
- 04 - Cadence DeGroot
- 08 - Linda Miller
- 08 - Donna Benedict
- 09 - Marsha Sutfin
- 12 - Easton Knapp
- 14 - Diane Brush
- 15 - Breeannia Johnson
- 16 - Kathy Schroeder
- 16 - Jim Benedict
- 17 - Eugene Johnson
- 17 - Fred Wessels
- 19 - Zachary Lashley
- 20 - Desirae Daughtery
- 21 - Tatman Almodovar
- 21 - Damdem Ella Knapp
- 22 - John Carey-Young
- 25 - Walter Shuberg III
- 26 - Gary Handloser
- 27 - Joanne Schuler



Image by Angela Rose from Pixabay

United Center for Caring

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The board met in July and September and will continue meeting every two months. All paperwork required by the State of Michigan has been brought up-to-date and finances are in order. The following programs are overseen by the United Center:

- Community Dinners
- Food Pantry
- The Orchard
- Partnership Park Meetings

New programs are being explored. If you have ideas for additional areas of service, or if you would like to join in this endeavor, please contact the church office.



Holy Spokes

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

One of the fun things we want to do is ride bicycles together! Jackson has some beautiful riding paths to explore. We'll meet Sunday, September 12 at 1:00 p.m. at the church parking lot, ready to ride!

September Calendar

SEPTEMBER 8 - COUNCIL MEETING 6PM

SEPTEMBER 12 - HOLY SPOKES 1 PM

SEPTEMBER 15 - HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

SEPTEMBER 17 - FOOD PANTRY 10AM-12PM

SEPTEMBER 24-25 - COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER



Image by Melk Hagelslag from Pixabay

"For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "Plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

Samaritan Fund

BECOMING GOOD SAMARITANS

St. John's is working to help our neighbors! We continue to receive calls for help with rent, electricity and water bills, and food.

In August, we received 16 requests for help with Consumers shut-off notices, 7 for water shut-off notices, 7 for rent/eviction assistance, 3 for emergency food assistance, and 2 for emergency motel stays. Paperwork was submitted and checks requested for 6 people: 3 for Consumers shut-offs, 2 for water shut-offs, and 1 for eviction assistance.

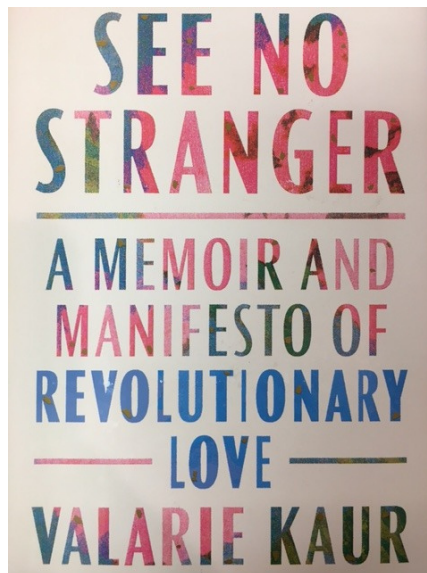
In September, eviction protections have ended, United Way funding for Consumers bill assistance has run out, extra unemployment benefits are ending, and water shut-offs are occurring. We expect an increase in requests for help. Please pray for our neighbors in financial need, and consider making a monetary gift to our Samaritan Fund.

Food Pantry

COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Our Community Food Pantry served 110 persons on August 20. Under Carl Robinson's leadership, the Food Pantry distributed 3200 pounds of food.

The next Food Pantry will be Friday, September 17, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.



Book Study

OCTOBER 3-NOVEMBER 14

See No Stranger was written by Valarie Kaur, a civil rights activist, lawyer, filmmaker, and the creator of Revolutionary Love Project.

Kaur was also a keynote speaker at the UCC General Synod in 2021. "Kaur takes readers through her own riveting journey -- as a brown girl growing up in California farmland finding her place in the world; as a young adult galvanized by the murders of Sikhs after 9/11; as an activist working with communities recovering from xenophobic attacks; and as a woman trying to heal from her own experiences with sexual assault and police violence."

We hope to discuss and learn about privilege, racism, and radical love together as a faith community during a book study that will begin Sunday October 3 at 9:00 a.m. Books are free, thanks to a UCC Prophetic Integrity grant! We need to know how many books to purchase, so contact Evelyn at the church office to sign up for this study.

-Pastor Judy

All Hands on Deck!

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Want to help?
Here's what you can do!

- Pray for St. John's congregation every day: pray for wisdom as we move forward, compassion for one another, and success for our outreach and missions.
- Assist with the Food Pantry on the third Friday of each month.
- Sign up to volunteer at the Baby Shower.
- Donate time or money for the Samaritan Fund.
- Pull weeds! The courtyard needs some loving care.
- Volunteer for Coffee Hour.
- Volunteer to be an Usher.
- Notice who's missing from worship ... and reach out with love.
- Call a friend to say hello, and let them know you care about them!



Rev. Judy Goodrow

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Healthy Congregations

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

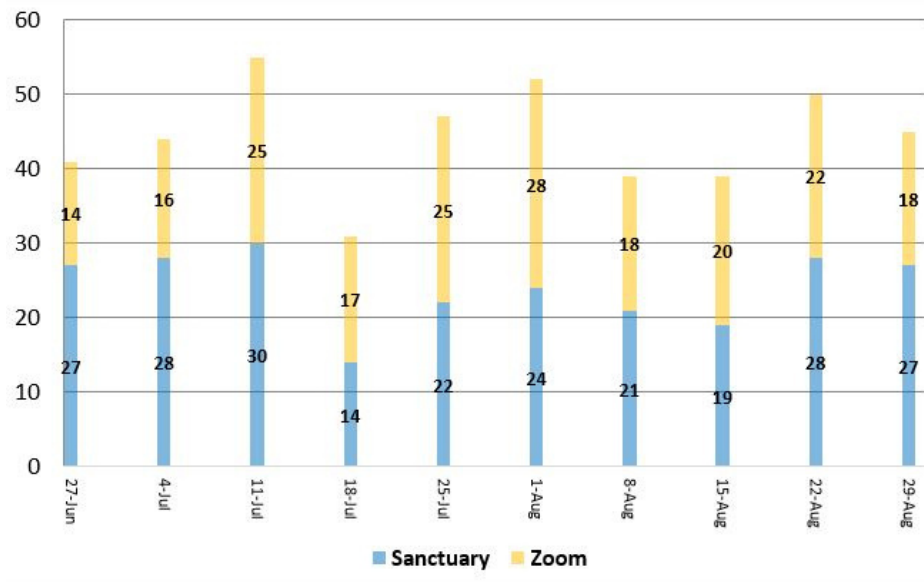
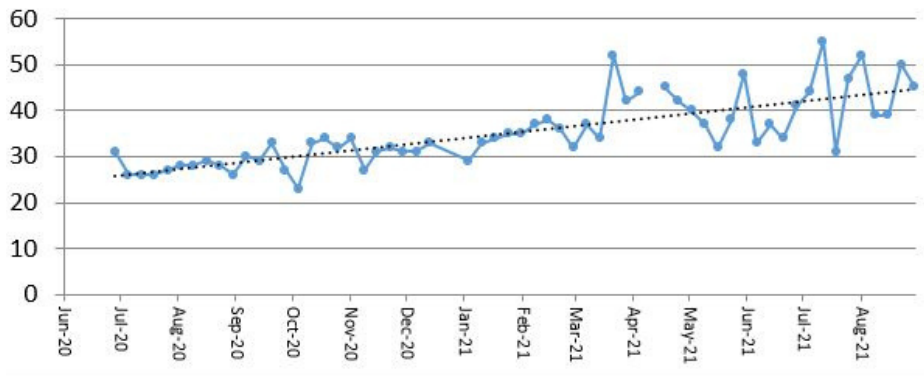
Our Healthy Congregations group met in August and discussed a sensitive topic: how LGBTQ youth and adults have been collectively shunned by Christians. Our conversation was both enlightening and frustrating: how do we help? How do we show that at St. John's, everyone is safe and everyone is welcome?

I suggested we hang a pride flag outdoors. The rainbow flag speaks more than one language; it tells the community we are open and affirming of our LGBTQ community, but it is also a testament of our inclusion of **all people**. The rainbow flag tells young, straight parents that St. John's is not going to teach their children to judge others. The rainbow flag reminds us, every time we see it, to be accepting of everyone.

If you haven't participated in Healthy Congregations, I don't know how you feel about this. Would you please let me know? Don't assume that I should already know, because I don't. I want to hear from YOU.

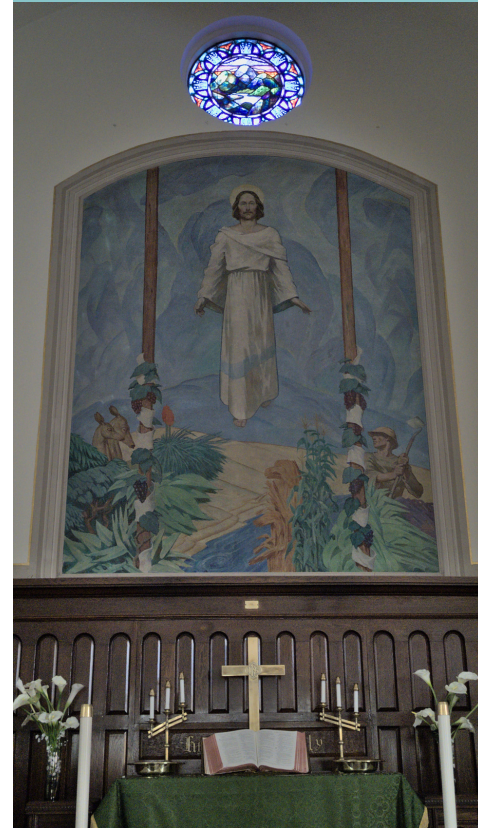
--Pastor Judy

Attendance
June 28, 2020 - Aug 29, 2021

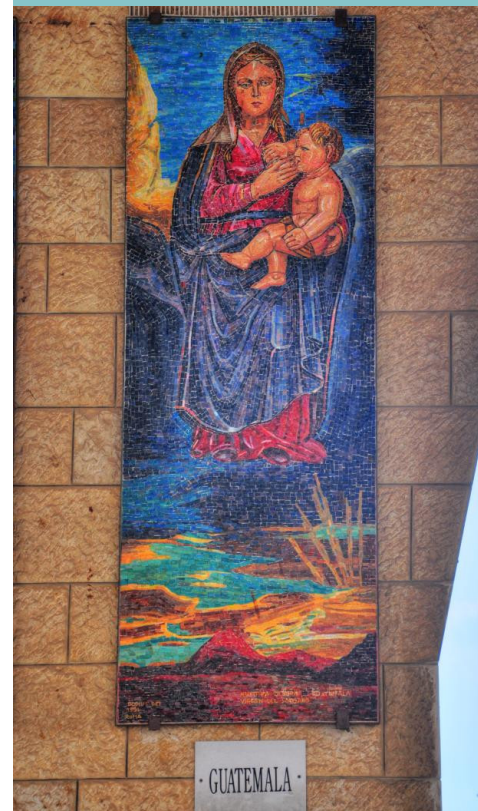


Council Update

The Church Council will resume meeting on September 8, both in-person and Zoom options available.



Above: *Man with a Hoe*, Depression-era painting of Jesus at St. John's UCC in Jackson, Michigan
Below: A Guatemalan painting of Mary and Jesus at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth



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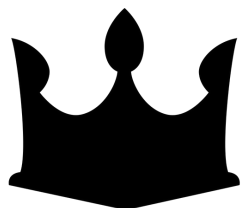
*Reach up,
Reach in,
Reach out!*



Affix Address
Label Here

*Whoever you are, and wherever
you are on life's journey ...*

*There's a place
for you here!*



St. John's
United Church of Christ

reach up, reach in, reach out