

# Joy of *ST. JOHN'S*

## *Cultivating Generosity*

### A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF GIVING

Generosity is spiritual. It brings a sense of abundance and feelings of joy and satisfaction. When we cling too tightly to our possessions, we close ourselves off to receiving God's blessings. When we give, we receive; we open our hearts to receive God's goodness. Why do we give to St. John's UCC? Here's what some of our members shared:

"Although categorized as low income last year I chose to increase my giving to St. John's and then God's math kicked in! My bills are all paid and my kitchen cupboards are full. God's math."

"I give to the church because I have been blessed by God and by the wonderful fellowship with the members of this beautiful church."

We'll be talking about generosity this month. Please prayerfully consider sharing your treasure, time and talent with our family at St. John's!

## *Defense Against the "Dark Arts"*

STAY SAFE ONLINE!

Cybercrime is a booming industry. Learn how to protect yourself from phishing scams, ransomware, and more in an increasingly complex digital world at our new "Defense Against the Dark Arts" class, taught by Evelyn, a certified computer person. No prior tech knowledge is required. Class will be held on Wednesday, November 3 at 11 a.m. in the Fellowship Room.



## *Baby Shower Update*

66 FAMILIES SERVED!

The 15th annual Community Baby Shower was held September 24 and 25, and it was a huge success! It was wonderful to see our community gather together. The participants attended in four groups, with opportunities for moms who missed the shower to attend later. This year's shower included a virtual Baby Expo with links available for moms to view information online, which may be the most valuable and innovative addition to the shower. Donna Benedict and her team did an amazing job of getting information, education and supplies to those who need it most! Thank you to all who contributed!

reach up,  
reach in,  
reach out

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# From the Pastor's Screen

## WORDS TO LIVE BY

Many years ago I read a Bible verse in the book of Isaiah that stuck in my mind: *"The Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word to sustain the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen as one being taught."* This verse became my life verse. These words are alive and active in me, and over the years they have guided my decisions and kept me anchored.

Today I am curious: what words reflect our life together as a family of faith? What verse would best describe St. John's and our mission?

At First Congregational UCC in Angola, Indiana these words from Matthew 25 appear on the walls approaching the sanctuary: *"I was hungry — you fed me. I was thirsty — you gave me a drink. I was homeless — you gave me a room."*

These words define and guide the congregation, and remind everyone of the mission of the church.

What words guide us? What would remind us of who we are called to be? Maybe this, from Micah 6: *"What does God require of us? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God."* Or this, from John 8: *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

If you have a life verse, I'd love to know about it! And if you think of a scripture that describes our church family, please let me know. I hope that one day soon we will have the living word on our walls ... words

that remind us of who we are in Christ. Words that keep us anchored and inform our decisions.

With great hope, Pastor Judy

## Physical Items Donation Policy

### GOT STUFF?

This policy applies to physical items up to and including musical instruments, wall art, furniture, and bric-a-brac. It excludes financial donations. Physical item donations must be discussed with the Facilities Team before the items are brought to the church. The Facilities Team reserves the right to decline to accept any physical item donations. Unsolicited donations will be considered abandoned property and subject to the abandoned property clause below. Physical items left in the church will be considered abandoned and become church property, to be utilized or disposed of at the Facilities Team's discretion. The Facilities Team may or may not attempt to contact the item's owner, at their discretion. Once ratified by the Church Council, this policy will be published via email and paper mail. Individuals who have previously donated physical items will have 60 days from the first publication to claim any previously donated physical items and remove them from church property. Once the 60 days have passed, donors relinquish any and all claims to previously donated physical items, and they become the sole property of the church, to be used or disposed of at the discretion of the Facilities Team (which currently is Carl, Pastor Judy, and Evelyn).

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7



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Image by Jeevan Singla from Pixabay

## October Birthdays

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

- 03 - Janeen Bush
- 05 - John Letson
- 06 - Brady Hoffman
- 08 - Danielle Hoffman
- 08 - Jackie Lunn
- 10 - Elaine Kalbarczyk
- 10 - Eileen Bolenbaugh
- 10 - Barry Kimble
- 16 - Norma Smith
- 17 - Dawn Thomas
- 21 - Kristi Shannon
- 23 - Eric Canter
- 26 - John Bonner
- 29 - Janine Osborne
- 30 - Sheila Sisk

## CROP Hunger Walk

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10

St. John's will support the CROP Walk for Hunger on Sunday, October 10. If you would like to walk together, our team is walking in Partnership Park following worship. This walk is a unique way to take action; it is an opportunity to help families who are struggling with hunger.

## Inclusive Game Night

LGBTQ AND BEGINNER FRIENDLY!

September 29th was our first Inclusive Game Night. Three people attended to play Dungeons & Dragons over snacks and soda, including delicious cookies made by our very own Harry Wilson.

Our goal is to provide a safe environment for anybody to come and have fun and build community together.

Dungeons & Dragons is an imaginative, collaborative storytelling game. One player, the Dungeon Master, controls the world and most of the characters, and presents the other players with challenges and scenarios. The other players each control one character with a unique personality and abilities.

We hope to expand to include board games and video games in the future.

To join in this endeavor, please contact the church office.



If you would like to donate, make checks payable to Church World Service/Crop, or you can donate directly to our food pantry through United Center for Caring. If you would like to walk with us, bring some walking shoes to worship! Harry Wilson will provide lunch for coffee hour. Immediately following lunch we'll take a walk!

## October Calendar

OCTOBER 3,10,17,24,31 - BOOK STUDY GROUP 9AM - SEE NO STRANGER

OCTOBER 9 - JO SUTFIN VISITATION 10AM FUNERAL 11AM

OCTOBER 13 - COUNCIL MEETING 6PM

OCTOBER 13, 27 - DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 5E GAME NIGHT 6PM

OCTOBER 15 - FOOD PANTRY 10AM-12PM

OCTOBER 16 - MICHIGAN UCC CONFERENCE 9:30AM -12PM ZOOM

OCTOBER 20 -HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

OCTOBER 24 - ELDER MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP

***"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."***

***Joshua 1:9***



# 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 September, we received 22 requests for help with Consumers shut-off notices, 6 for water shut-off notices, 10 for rent/eviction assistance, 4 for emergency food assistance, and 1 for emergency motel stays. Paperwork was submitted and checks requested for 16 people: 8 for Consumers shut-offs, 3 for water shut-offs, and 1 for eviction assistance, and 4 received food. Everyone is offered additional assistance through other agencies.

In September many forms of assistance ended. Please pray for our neighbors in financial need, and consider making a monetary gift to our Samaritan Fund.

*"Sometimes when we are generous in small, barely detectable ways it can change someone else's life forever."*

—Margaret Cho

## Food Pantry

### COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Our Community Food Pantry served 103 persons on September 17. Under Carl Robinson's leadership, the Food Pantry distributed 2600 pounds of food. Many thanks to the faithful volunteers! The next Food Pantry will be Friday, October 15, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

# Book Study

SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER @ 9AM

Author Valarie Kaur's unique perspective on Revolutionary Love will challenge us! We hope to discuss and learn about privilege, racism, and radical love together during this study that began Sunday October 3 at 9:00 a.m. in the Prayer Room. Books are free, thanks to a UCC Prophetic Integrity grant. It's not too late to join in! Sign up in the church office.

## Sauerkraut?

### FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

If you're able to help with the Sauerkraut Supper, please let the church office know. If we don't have enough support, we'll wait until 2022.

## United Center for Caring

### REACHING OUT

The United Center for Caring board met September 1 and discussed our purpose, finances, and outreach opportunities. It's exciting to see this organization revive! We agreed to begin each meeting with a centering activity, lead with kindness, and generate consensus. Community members have been invited to participate, and possible outreach activities are being explored. In September \$240 was received in private donations. Contributions are tax deductible.

The next UC4C meeting is November 3.

## 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.
- Donate time or money to 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!



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# Healthy Congregations

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



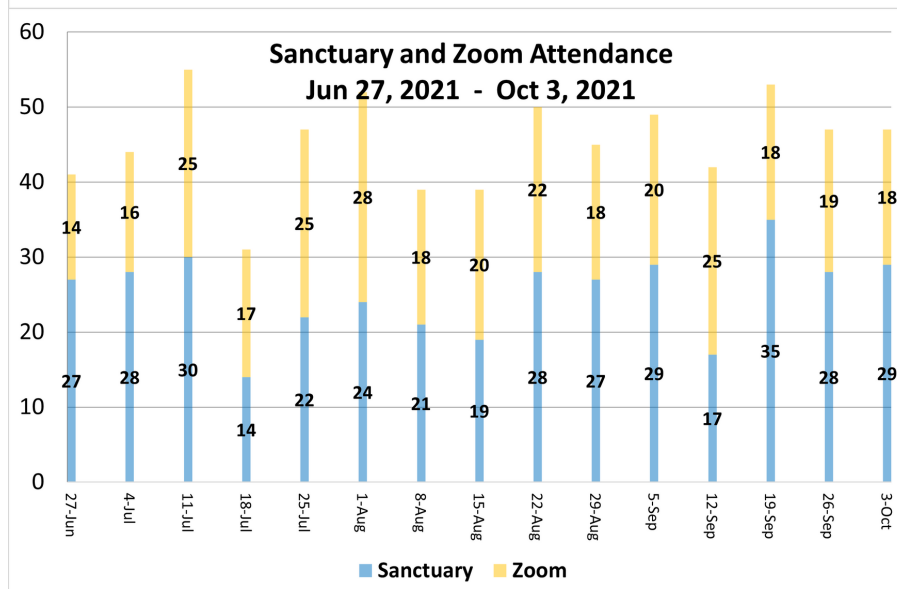
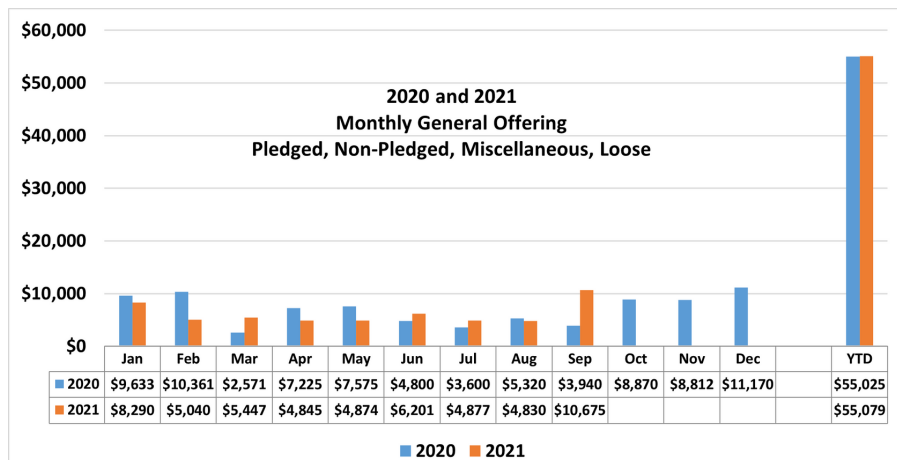
Our Healthy Congregations group met in September and discussed our worship service. What works? What can be changed? How can we be more inviting and welcoming during worship?

With this conversation in mind, we moved the offering, doxology and pastoral prayer earlier in our service. The reading of scripture, our morning message, and communion will draw our worship to a close each week. We added instructional lines into our bulletin, explaining the flow of our worship service, which we hope will allow visitors to relax and feel like they know what's going on.

We've relaxed a bit too; we're singing with masks and we're sharing the peace of Christ with one another using elbow and fist bumps. This general time of greeting has done wonders to energize our worship experience!

Everyone is invited to participate in our Healthy Congregations group. We had the largest group ever in attendance in September. This month we'll continue our conversation on October 20. I would love to see you there!

—Pastor Judy



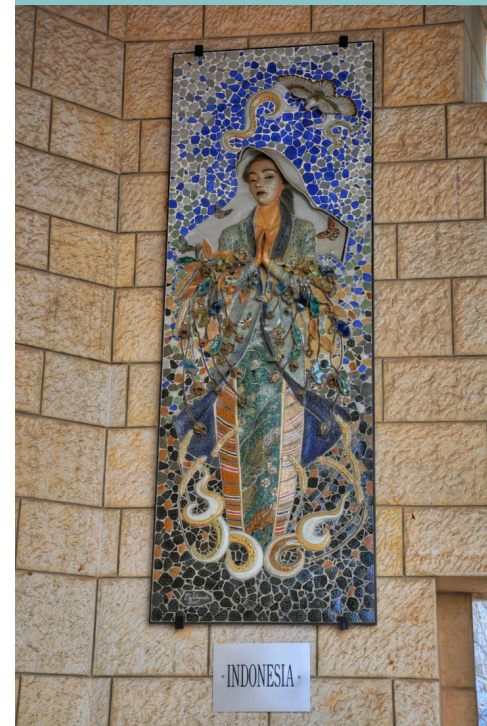
## Council Update

The Church Council met on September 8 and the following business was discussed:

- American Red Cross annual lease was approved;
- Annual purchase of copyright licensing for worship music was approved;
- Bookkeeping service has been cancelled, but payroll services remain in place;
- \$1000 will be donated to Nation Outside from the Timothy Fund;
- Physical Donations Policy was adopted and appears in the October newsletter;
- The Sauerkraut Dinner will be announced and will be scheduled pending volunteer assistance.

Full minutes are available in the church office. The next Council meeting will be October 8 at 6PM in person and via Zoom.

Below: An Indonesian mosaic of Mary 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

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