

Joy of *ST. JOHN'S*

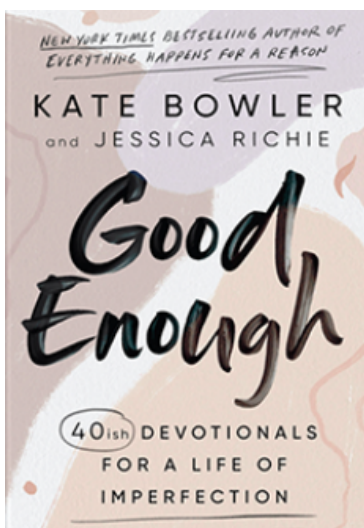
Lenten Study

"GOOD ENOUGH" DAILY DEVOTIONS

During the season of Lent, we will be reading the book "Good Enough" by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. Filled with gentle humor, Good Enough explains that there are some things you can fix—and some things you can't. And it's okay that life isn't always better. In these 40+ devotions, Bowler and Richie offer imagination for how meaning can be discovered amid the chaos of life. We are invited to rest, knowing that the life in front of us can be beautiful. Or at least, good enough!

We have a discussion guide available and plan to talk about these devotions each Sunday during coffee hour, in-person and on Zoom.

Books are \$15. If you would like a book, please contact Evelyn in the church office.



Preserving St. John's History

CELEBRATING THE PAST

The original entrance to our sanctuary has received a face-lift! Carl has done an amazing remodeling job. The ceiling has been raised, the walls were painted, and a hidden stained-glass window was revealed.

This beautiful entrance is the perfect place to display our history. We are still looking for a team of people to sort through pictures, books and documents and decide how best to showcase the history of St. John's.

If you like history, and if you have an eye for display, this is the job for you! Or nominate a friend who enjoys history. Please let Pastor Judy know if you would like to participate. The deadline for this project is **Easter Sunday, April 17.**

reach up,
reach in,
reach out

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LEAN INTO LENT

Lent is the forgotten middle child. Sandwiched between the afterglow of Christmas and the springtime feel of Easter, Lent tends to be ignored. It probably lost popularity when it was linked with exciting spiritual disciplines like *fasting* and *repentance*. No one likes discipline; fasting is something we dread, and repentance reminds us of a fiery mythological hell. Where are the Christmas carols and candy canes? Bring on the Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies! Lent can't compete.

So why celebrate Lent? What's good about it?

Lent marks the 40 days (excluding Sundays) prior to Easter. It has historically been a time of contemplation as new Christians prepared to be baptized. These 40 days are symbolic of the days Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting, praying, and enduring temptation. It's not meant to be a vacation! But it was - and is - necessary. As we move toward resurrection and new beginnings, Lent invites us to quietly examine our faith. Why do we believe? *What do we believe?*

My beliefs have changed significantly over my lifetime, and they weren't transformed during Christmas parties and Easter egg hunts. Transformation happens when we're knee-deep in the muck of life. Lent invites us to get going when the going gets tough ... and propels us forward using those "disciplines" we'd rather ignore.

Lent isn't a party, but maybe our reluctance to participate is telling us something. Maybe we resist silence and stillness, refusing to say "no" to our daily distractions ... because that's when we're most likely to hear God's voice. Maybe we're afraid.

Maybe Lent is exactly what we need.

We can begin gently by reserving some time each morning for stillness. Just breathe. Just be. Remind yourself that life is found in those small moments when the air fills your lungs, and your lips can smile.

We can press on each evening by taking inventory of our day. When did we feel joy? When did we say or do something we regret? In your mind, rewrite your day the way you wish it had been, and forgive yourself and everyone else.

If we're feeling brave, let's lean into this Lenten season by asking the really tough questions:

What do we believe?
Why does it matter?
Are we living our beliefs?
What parts of our lives are fake?
What do we keep hidden?
What needs to change?

While we're wrestling with these questions, we might find that fasting, prayer, repentance and forgiveness are our friends ... friends that will lead us to find meaning in this life. Friends that help us remember we belong to God and point us toward a faith that transforms us.

Let's do less and feel more. Let's find the holy in our everyday, ordinary lives during Lent.

Leaning in, Pastor Judy

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21

Words for our walls?



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March Birthdays

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

- 1 - Linda Chase
- 1 - Peter Woodruff
- 2 - Dawn Benedict
- 5 - Katherine Steck - 101 years!
- 10 - Linda Canter
- 16 - Penny Smeltzer
- 17 - Julie Leece
- 20 - Rose Johnson
- 22 - Leslie Cummings
- 22 - Wanda Beavers
- 24 - Daryl Hackworth
- 26 - Paul Kalbarczyk



Freedom Forum

AWARENESS, EDUCATION, ACTION

On Saturday, March 19, the Set Free Movement and MyPlace will be hosting a Freedom Forum here in Jackson.

The goals of this conference are to raise awareness about the vulnerability of young people to traffickers and to provide ways to partner together to reduce those vulnerabilities. Participants include Michigan Department of Health



Transforming Hearts class

ZOOM CLASS CONTINUES

For the past three weeks, Pastor Judy and Michele Wilson have participated in the Extravagant Welcome Zoom Class led and hosted by Pastor Dan Miyake of Liberty Universalist Unitarian Church in Clarklake. Each Thursday we meet with this group to discuss gender, gender expression and biases, and inclusivity. Our conversations have been inspiring and thoughtful.

The class curriculum was developed by the Transforming Hearts Collective, which resources faith communities and other groups for the work of radical inclusion for LGBTQ+ persons.

We hope to share this information with our congregation later this year, so we can learn how to be truly welcoming to all.

and Human Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters, SOAR, Pathways, Isaiah's Hub, MLK Center and Jackson Interfaith Shelter.

Parents, grandparents and concerned citizens are all invited to attend. The registration is \$20, including a continental breakfast and boxed lunch. The event will be held at Isaiah's Hub (in the former Tomlinson Elementary School), 730 Tomlinson Street, Jackson.

To register or for more information please call Evelyn in the church office.

March Calendar

MARCH 2 - DRIVE THRU ASHES AT NOON

MARCH 3,10,17 - TRANSFORMING HEARTS ONLINE CLASS 6:30 PM

MARCH 9 - COUNCIL MEETING 3 PM

MARCH 13 - DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS - SPRING FORWARD ONE HOUR!

MARCH 16 - BABY SHOWER MEETING 11 AM ON ZOOM

MARCH 16 - HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS 6 PM ON ZOOM

MARCH 17 - NAACP MEETING 6 PM

MARCH 18 - FOOD PANTRY 10 AM-12 PM



Upcoming in April

APRIL 10 - PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 14 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 15 - GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 17 - EASTER SUNDAY

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.

For February 2022 we had 14 requests for help with Consumer's shut offs; 1 check was requested. There were 5 requests for assistance with water bills; 4 checks were requested. There were 6 requests for emergency food. There were 2 requests for motel stays. There were 5 requests for gas cards, which were referred to Jackson Giving Back to the Community and Love in the Name of Christ.

Please remember the Samaritan Fund in your giving!

"No one has ever become poor by giving." — Anne Frank

Baby "Sprinkles"

EXPANDED BABY SHOWER NEEDS

Each month our Baby Shower team is participating in the Food Pantry, offering baby items, clothing, diapers and more to moms in need. The goal is to journey with the moms and babies who participated in the annual Baby Shower. Last month 22 families received items!

We are currently in need of **diapers** of all sizes. Please contact Donna Benedict at the church office to find out how you can join in this unique ministry!

Hats, Mittens and Socks

COLD WEATHER CONTINUES!

We will be providing the community with hats, mittens, gloves, and warm socks during the winter months. Please bring your donations to the church office and Carl will hang them outside for those in need. Thank you for your generosity!



Car Seats!

GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED

The need in our community for car seats continues -- and the Covenant Association has contributed a NOW grant of \$1290 to St. John's for the purchase of 10 car seats for the baby shower and baby sprinkles! Thank you, Covenant Association!

Food Pantry

COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Our Community Food Pantry was held on February 18 and continues to serve families in need. We provided 1800 pounds of food and served 80 individuals, representing 192 family members. Many thanks to our faithful team of volunteers! The next Food Pantry will be Friday, March 18, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

All Hands on Deck!

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

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

- Read our Lenten devotions from the book "Good Enough."
- Join the History Team and decorate the original entrance.
- 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.
- Bring diapers for the Baby Shower.
- Volunteer to be an Usher.
- Offer your musical gifts.
- 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!



Watch for Easter Lily order forms at the end of the month!
The cost is \$11 this year.

Rev. Judy Goodrow
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Healthy Congregations

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

In January our Healthy Congregations group discussed marketing slogans and wall art ... and that led me to reflect on my candidate weekend with all of you in March of 2021. During those meetings I recorded the many words you used to describe St. John's. Evelyn fashioned those words into the word clouds on Page 2 and in the sidebar at right. I was looking for words from the bible -- and that's exactly what these words reflect! What do you think? Would these words tell visitors who we are and why we gather?

I would love to see more of you participate in Healthy Congregations -- we talk each month about what how our church can continue to serve, thrive and grow! We'll continue our conversation on March 16 -- and hopefully engage the whole congregation in conversation on Sunday, March 20.

—Pastor Judy

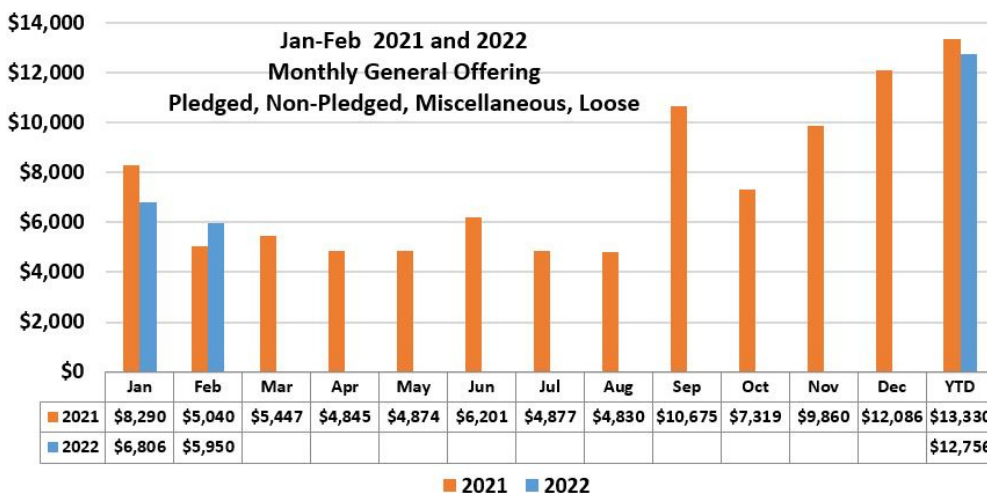
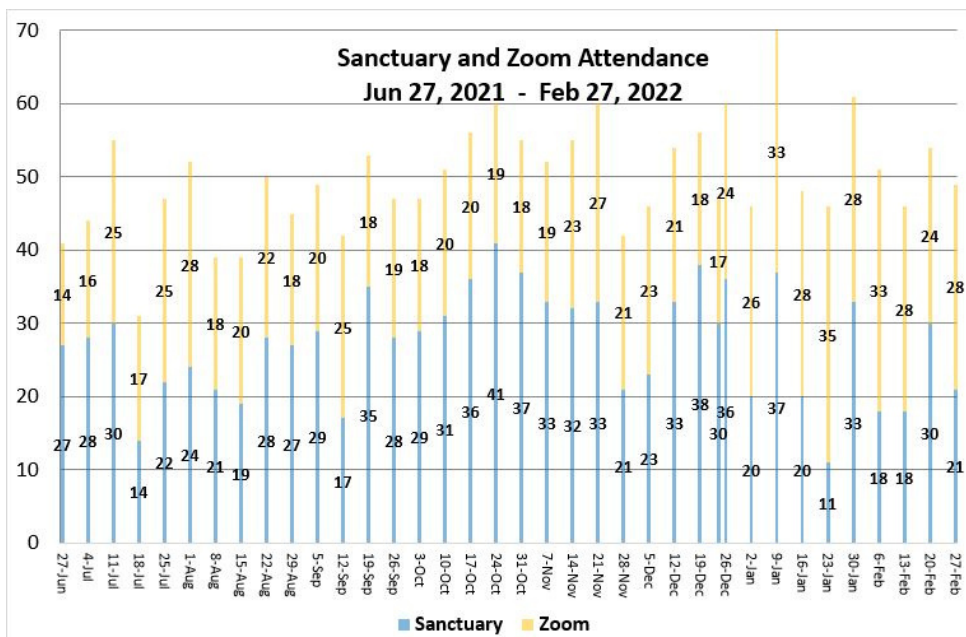


Council Update

The Church Council met on February 9 and the following business was discussed:

- A donation of \$1000 plus any additional donations will be made from the Timothy Fund to support Nation Outside;
- The insurance policy was reviewed and four new quotes have been obtained;
- The transition from Church Windows to the Aplos accounting system will be complete by February 28;
- The job description for the music tech position(s) will be revised and updated;
- Samaritan Fund disbursement guidelines will be discussed by the Social Concerns Team;
- Cost limit for mechanical repairs without council approval was raised from \$300 to \$500;
- Baby Shower/Sprinkle will move to the lower level in the room previously used for food pantry;
- The revised constitution is available for review.

Full minutes are available in the church office. The next Council meeting will be March 9 at 3 PM in person and via Zoom.



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*Reach up,
Reach in,
Reach out!*



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*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

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