

Joy of ST. JOHN'S UCC



Be the Blessing

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Our 2023 Stewardship Drive is underway. Everyone should have received an invitation to Be the Blessing as God called us in Genesis 12:3.

There are many ways to be a blessing. Our pledge card lists volunteer opportunities, and each financial pledge helps us prepare our annual budget.

Be the Blessing! Join with us as we bless our community and beyond. Pledge cards may be mailed in, emailed or placed in the offering box.



Dance, Dance, Dance!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26

The first Special Needs Dance was a roaring success. Approximately 100 attended the Halloween dance in October. Many thanks to Linda Miller, Carl Robinson, Art Bonner and Barb Parks for their dedication and hard work.

The next dance will be held in the Social Hall on November 26 from 7-9 PM. Friends, family, and allies are all welcome to join in the fun. Light refreshments will be served.

Questions? Call Linda Miller or contact the church office. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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10:30 AM Sunday Worship

BEGINS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

This Sunday we return to our 10:30 AM

worship time. During our congregational meeting it was decided to worship at 10 AM during the summer months, and 10:30 AM the rest of the year. It's also the end of Daylight Saving Time. Be sure to adjust your clocks and be ready to worship at 10:30 AM this Sunday!

From the Pastor's Screen

CENTERING PRAYER

Philosopher Blaise Pascal famously said, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

Unfortunately, modern science supports the idea that we resist sitting in stillness. In a 2014 experiment, 55 participants were invited to sit in solitude for 15 minutes, or they could administer an electric shock to their ankle. 67% of the male participants and 25% of the female participants chose to shock themselves instead of doing nothing.

Have we forgotten how to be still?

How long can we sit without checking our phones, tablets or other devices? How long can we sit without turning on the TV? Or zapping our ankle?

Stillness may be difficult for us, but it is essential. In Fr. Thomas Keating's classic book *Open Heart, Open Mind* he states that interior silence brings deep refreshment and leads us to communion with God. Fr. Keating teaches a spiritual practice called Centering Prayer, which helps us find the interior space that Jesus described when he said, "Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door."

Our place of stillness may be a physical place, but it is primarily a spiritual place. Susanna Wesley, mother of John and Charles Wesley, had nineteen children. Whenever she wanted to pray, she pulled her apron

over her head and created her own inner room. (If I had nineteen children, I would need more than an apron!) Susanna managed to quiet herself enough to connect with God, which is the ultimate goal of prayer.

So how does Centering Prayer work? If you have worshiped with us, you've noticed that we sometimes use guided meditation to bring ourselves into interior silence. This may be uncomfortable for some, but it cultivates the stillness we need to connect with God. In Centering prayer, we choose a word or phrase. The practice begins with a simple relaxation of the body, while the mind stays centered and alert. We notice our thoughts, but we don't suppress them, we just let them go by. We open our awareness to God, noticing peace and calm. Whenever our mind wanders, as it will, we silently repeat our centering words. Common word choices are *Jesus*, *I AM*, or *loving kindness*. Choose words that are meaningful to you, then practice sitting quietly and comfortably for 15 minutes, increasing the time until you reach 30 minutes of stillness each day.

If it's that easy, why is it so hard? I think it's because we live in a society that demands productivity, and silent prayer feels passive. We believe that prayer means stating our list of needs and wants, so God can fix everything - or at least, that's what we hope.

God wants more than that, and so do we. We crave connection; we want to feel known, loved, and accepted. Our laundry list of prayer requests will not lead us to that experience of love, but stillness will: "Be still and know that I am God." Or, we can shock ourselves.

Aprons up,

Pastor Judy

"But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.."

Matthew 6:6 NRSV



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November Birthdays

TIME TO CELEBRATE

- 11 - St. John's, since 1883 ♥
- 18 - Sandra Harkness
- 28 - R'yanna Shannon
- 30 - Laura Hayes



Community Dinner

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Our next Community Dinner will be Tuesday, November 22 at 6 PM, featuring the return of our famous taco bar with all the fixings.

Funding for the dinners is provided by the United Center for Caring. Last month 60 people (yes, 60!) attended our dinner. This is a great opportunity to meet and form relationships with families right here in Partnership Park.

Hope to see you there!

November Calendar

NOV 2 - SAUERKRAUT SUPPER FEATURING CALVARY BRASS ENTERTAINMENT

NOV 4 - LEARNING ENRICHMENT & ARTS (LEAP) 1:30-3:30 PM

NOV 6 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM ALL SAINTS REMEMBRANCE REV CONNIE PREACHING

NOV 8 - VOTE

NOV 9 - COUNCIL MEETS 3 PM

NOV 13 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM WITH HOLY COMMUNION PASTOR PJ PREACHING

NOV 18 - FOOD PANTRY AND BABY SPRINKLES 10 AM-12 PM

NOV 18 - LEARNING ENRICHMENT & ARTS (LEAP) 1:30-3:30 PM

NOV 20 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM

NOV 22 - COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM TACO BAR

NOV 23 - COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING WORSHIP AT INTERFAITH SHELTER 5:30 PM

NOV 24 - THANKSGIVING DAY OFFICE CLOSED

NOV 26 - SPECIAL NEEDS DANCE 7-9 PM

NOV 27 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Free Books

PRAYER ROOM

We have a selection of books displayed in the Prayer Room that would like to be read! Please stop in the Prayer Room to browse and take a few home or share them with a friend.



Community Thanksgiving

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

The Jackson Area Ministers Association is hosting a Community Thanksgiving Worship Service on Wednesday, November 23 at 5:30 PM.

The service will be held in the dining room at the Jackson Interfaith Shelter. There will not be a meal, but everyone is welcome to enjoy warm fellowship and worship together from various faith traditions.

Samaritan Fund

BECOMING GOOD SAMARITANS

In October 2022 we had 4 requests for help with Consumer's bills. There were 6 requests for help with rent; 2 checks were requested. One person requested water bill assistance; 1 check was requested. We received one request for help with a motel stay and two gas money requests which were referred to other agencies. There were 5 requests for emergency food; all 5 were given emergency food. Donations are always appreciated.

Baby Sprinkles

AND KIDS' CLOSET

Baby Sprinkles has expanded to include Kids' Closet, which provides clothing up to size 14, in addition to baby items, infant clothing, and diapers. Last month 27 families received items, serving 50 children. We appreciate donations. Come see us in action on November 18 from 10 AM to 12 PM.



Many thanks to Duane Leece and Alan Richmond for our new gate!

LEAP

LEARNING ENRICHMENT AND ARTS

The United Center for Caring's Learning Enrichment and Arts Program (LEAP) continues to grow. Students, teachers and volunteers will gather Friday November 4 and 18 from 1:30-3:30 PM in the Social Hall at SJUCC.

Funding was provided for LEAP by grants from the United Center for Caring. This program will assist the students as well as connect SJUCC with our neighborhood families.

Volunteers can provide general help during our two-hour Friday sessions. No special skills needed; you can be an on-site grandparent responsible for giving gentle direction and encouragement. Contact the church office or Michele Wilson if you can help.



Food Pantry

COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

Our Community Food Pantry was held on October 21 and continues to serve families in need. In October we provided 1500 pounds of food and served 94 individuals, representing 280 family members. Many thanks to Carl and our faithful team of volunteers. The next Food Pantry will be Friday, October 21, from 10 AM to 12 PM.



Cathy Welker and Barb Parks enjoy the Halloween Dance

Be the Blessing

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Here's what you can do to be a blessing:

- Invite friends to church.
- Join in the fun at our next Community Dinner.
- Help with the NHL Initiative or LEAP.
- Pray for our church every day!
- Donate time or money to the Samaritan Fund or Food Pantry.
- Bring diapers and donations for the Baby Sprinkles and Kids' Closet.
- Volunteer to be an Usher.
- Sign up for Coffee Hour.
- Offer your musical gifts.
- Notice who's missing from worship ... and reach out with love!

Be the Blessing

Genesis 12



Rev. Judy Goodrow

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Sauerkraut Supper is Back!

FEATURING ENTERTAINMENT BY CALVARY BRASS

On Wednesday, November 2 at 5:30 PM we will be serving our famous sauerkraut supper. Under the direction of culinary artists Bert Steck and Carl Robinson, dinner will be served in the Social Hall with entertainment by the Calvary Brass. Suggested donation is \$15. Meals will be delivered by request.

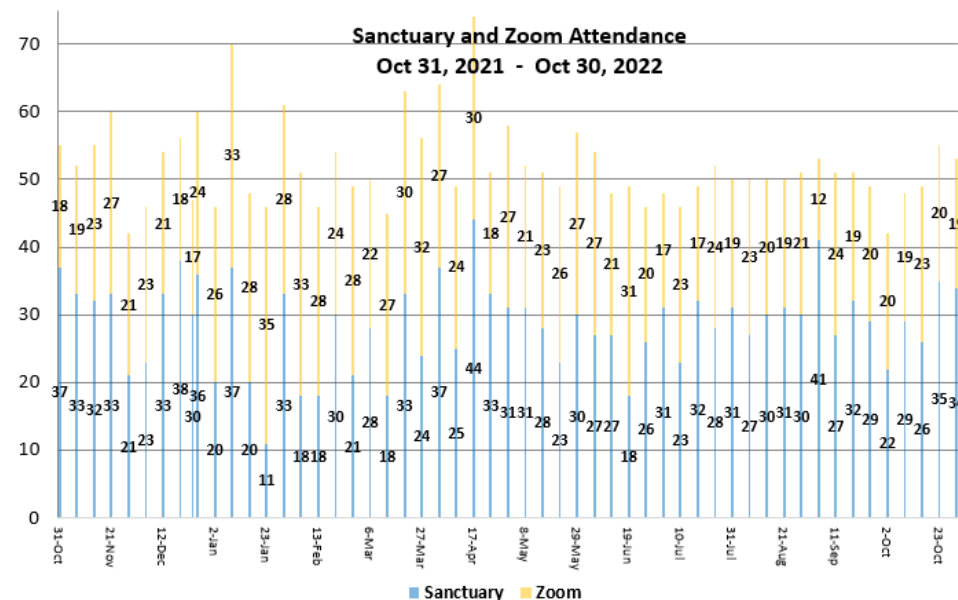
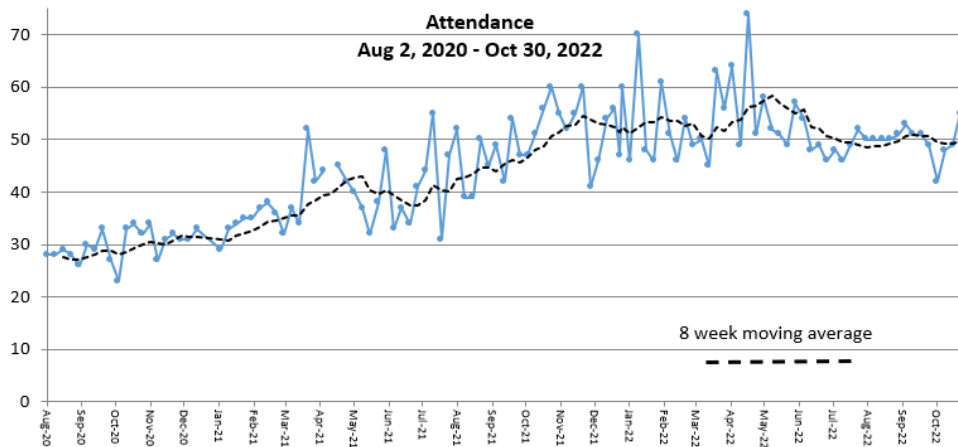
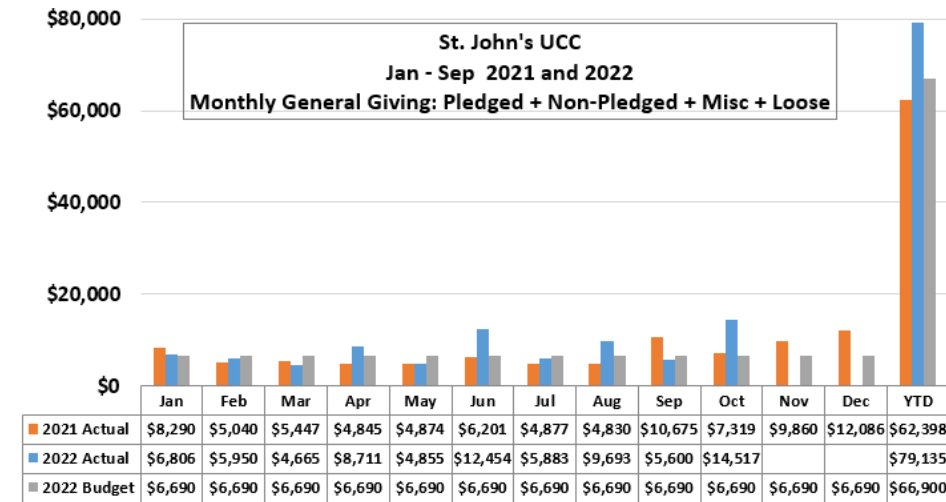


Council Update

The Church Council met October 12 and the following items were discussed:

- Samaritan Fund and Food Pantry received nearly \$6500 in donations in September
- Plans for the Sauerkraut Supper were discussed
- Dena from Dungytreeti would like to begin an afterschool program once volunteer background checks are completed
- Dungytreeti will supply food for our emergency food pantry
- Forty-six items of business from the past year were addressed, updated or added to next month's agenda
- Agenda for the October 30 Congregational meeting was determined
- LEAP program supplies will be stored in the small room off the Prayer Room
- Revised contract with American Red Cross for training and blood drives was approved.

Meeting minutes for past meetings are available in the church office. The next Council meeting will be November 9 at 3 PM in person and via Zoom.



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Label Here

Encouraging people to

reach up to worship God,



reach in to strengthen faith, and

reach out in service to others.

St. John's

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Love God ♥ Love People ♥ Serve Both

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