



St. John's

United Church of Christ

Contribution-based newsletter

Our news has a new look.

As we move toward welcoming our faithful friends from Westminster Presbyterian Church, we have changed the format of our newsletter. Here are the highlights:

All of our neighborhood partners are welcome to contribute news.

Our newsletter will be contribution-based. That means YOU submit news for print. If you are the lead person for one of our many teams and missions, or if you want to showcase a special event, send a paragraph to the church office with any updates you want the congregation to know. Pictures are great too!

The print is bigger and easier to read.

We will print, email, and mail the newsletter bi-monthly. If we have a newsy season, we'll print, email, and mail monthly.

Our newsletter will be as long or as short as contributions allow. It's up to you! Send your news to stjohnsuccjackson@gmail.com.

January Calendar

JAN 2 - ARC BLOOD DRIVE ALL DAY; ENNEAGRAM DISCUSSION 4 PM;
CENTERING PRAYER 5 PM

JAN 7,14,21,28 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM

JAN 10,17,24,31 - OH, FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC! 2 PM

JAN 10 - COUNCIL MEETING 3 PM

JAN 15 - MLK DAY

JAN 19 - FOOD PANTRY AND BABY SPRINKLES 10AM-12 PM

JAN 23- COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM

JAN 27 - COMMUNITY SPECIAL NEEDS WINTER DANCE 7-9 PM

JAN 28 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP

January 2024



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From the Pastor's Screen

ADAPTATION

At the beginning of each year, I ask God for direction as I choose an intention for the days to come. This year our intention is “adapt.” Nature teaches us all about adaptation. Animals do it all the time to survive as conditions around them change.

The Atlantic pygmy octopus can change its appearance when predators are nearby; it takes on the form and color of a rock. A leaf-tailed gecko changes its appearance to (you guessed it) a leaf. A wood frog can survive the most brutal weather as far north as Alaska by allowing 60 percent of its body to freeze. In the spring, it thaws.

Animals know how to survive. What about churches?

If we are willing to adapt, we can continue to worship and serve together far into the future. The question is, what does adaptation look like?

- It looks like a newsletter that is the joint effort of all.
- It looks like differences in our worship, music, staff, and offices.
- It looks like making space in our sanctuary for another church's treasured items.
- It looks like the closing of some activities and missions in order to support new, combined efforts.
- It looks like frank and open conversations where everyone participates.
- It looks like a blended family -- because that's what we will be.

Let's choose to adapt. Let's look for times and places where we can practice adaptation -- letting go of something good to make room for something better. When we're feeling uncomfortable, just remember the wood frog, and hold in your heart the feeling of a warm spring breeze. We will thaw. We will adapt. We will survive. We will thrive!

Ribbit-rrribbit!

- Pastor Judy



I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 NRSV

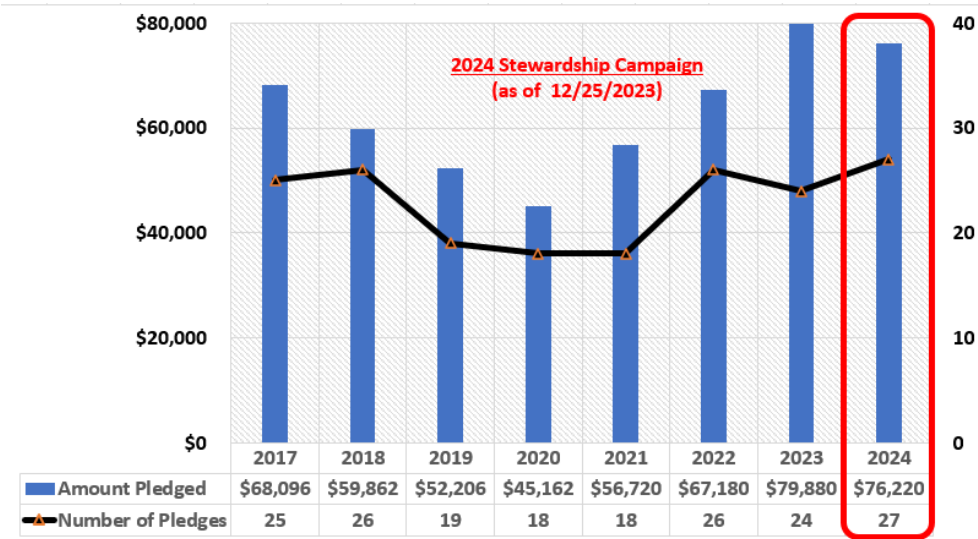


Rev. Judy Goodrow

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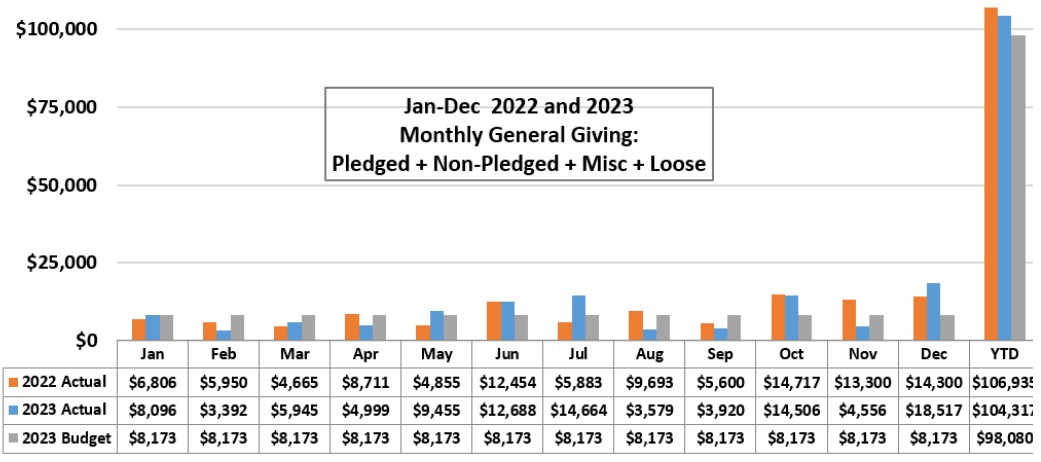
Be the Blessing

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

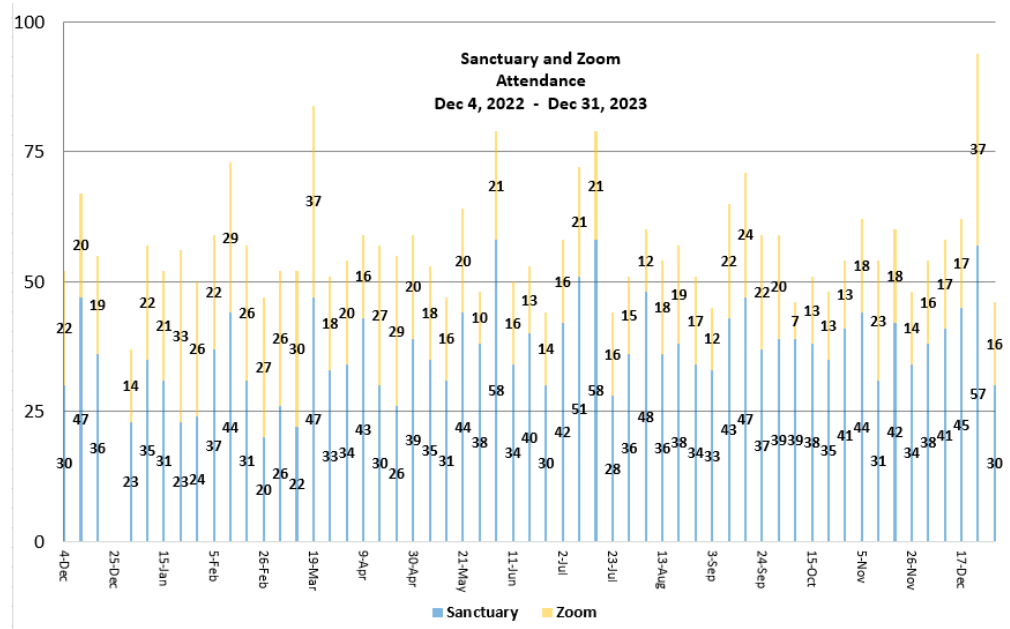
Here's what you can do to be a blessing:

- Invite friends to church!
- Bring warm hats, scarves, gloves
- Come and sing every Wednesday
- Attend the Community Dinner - or bring dessert
- Help with the NHL library
- Pray for our church
- Bring 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!

Graphs are provided by Bert Steck, Financial Secretary

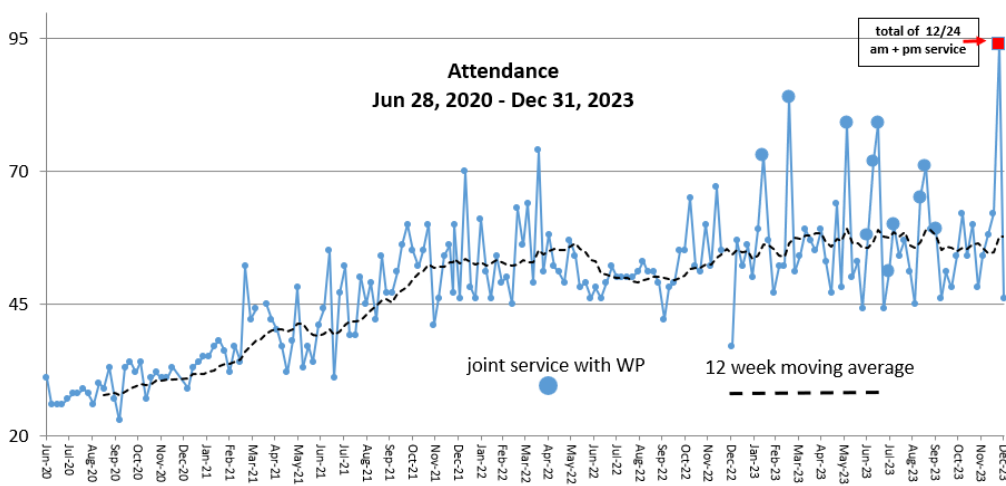


Dear Friends,
 The donation statements for the year 2023 will be sent out by January 5th, 2024. Kindly review your statement and notify Bert Steck, the Financial Secretary, of any discrepancies at 734-476-6664 or albertsteck8@gmail.com. Your cooperation is appreciated.
 Thank you, Bert



Our December food pantry served 136 persons, representing 416 family members. 4100 pounds of food was donated.

Contributed by Carl Robinson



What's in a Name?

WAYS TO PARTNER

Names matter. Parents often struggle to choose the “right” name for their child. I recently met a young boy named Wilde. And, well, he is a little wild! He’s growing into his name.

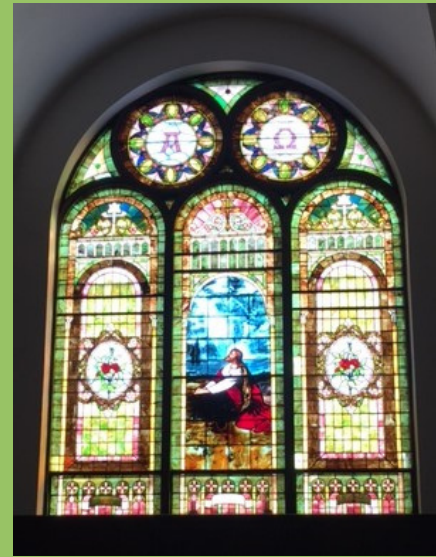
For many months we’ve been wondering what it might look like to partner with another church in joint witness ministry. Since we are not merging together, we will remain St. John’s UCC, while our partner church will remain Westminster Presbyterian Church. I have asked the council to consider naming our physical location at 801 S. Mechanic Street “Partnership Place” as a way to include WPC. When I presented this idea to the church council, some members liked the name and others did not. Just as parents need time to consider their child’s name, we are considering what a new name might mean.

My reasons for naming our building Partnership Place are threefold:

- It is a welcoming and inclusive name for everyone who uses our building, including those who rent space, and it provides a warm welcome to Westminster Presbyterian Church.
- It shows solidarity with our neighborhood, Partnership Park.
- It differentiates us from St. John’s Catholic Church.

Why is this important? Why can’t we just stay the same? Many of you remember the “good old days” when the church was filled with people. When a church is growing, it is moving up the bell curve (see next page) and its strength is found in vision and relationships.

(continued)



A good name
is to be chosen
rather than great riches,
and favor is better
than silver or gold.

Proverbs 22:1 NRSV

Our December Baby Sprinkle served 37 families, representing 88 children. In 2023, we served 317 families representing 710 children!

Contributed by
Donna Benedict

WHAT'S IN A NAME (CONTINUED)

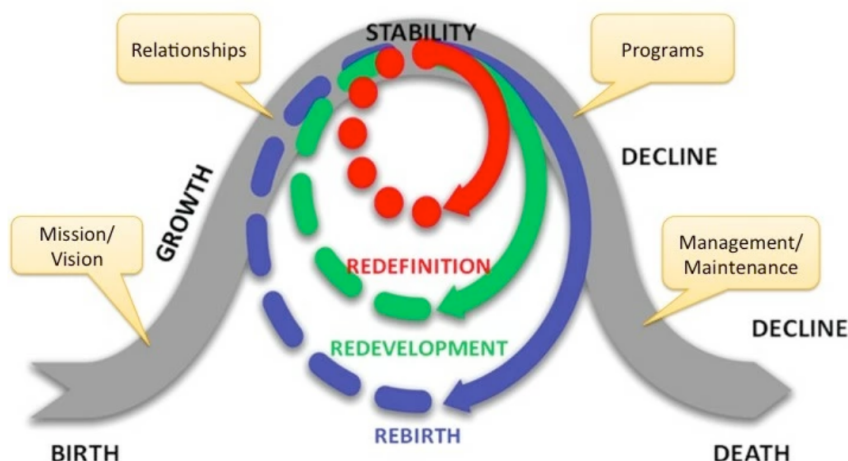
At the top of the graph, we reach our peak and begin to mature. We focus less on vision and relationships, and more on programs and maintenance. If we continue down the bell curve, we end with death -- the closing of St. John's UCC.

That doesn't have to happen. If we act now to re-define, re-develop, and become re-born, we can move away from maintenance and move toward vision and relationships again. We can begin to grow. Staying the course is not an option. We must adapt.

After a candid conversation with one of our members, I understand that I cannot make this choice for you. I cannot pick a name or a course of action. This church consists of members who have grown up here and have remained faithful for far longer than my short tenure. If we make any changes, it's up to you -- you choose. Maybe a new name is unnecessary ... maybe there are other methods that will help us change our trajectory. At our upcoming congregational meeting, many voices will share their heartfelt opinions. It is my hope that all of us can respectfully join into this conversation.

Please prayerfully consider our future actions as we welcome Westminster Presbyterian in joint witness ministry. Just as parents consider carefully the name of a new child and how they will provide for it, we envision the re-birth of St. John's UCC as part of a combined ministry. It's my prayer, whether we adopt the name "Partnership Place" or not, that we will live into the spirit of that name long into the future.

-- Pastor Judy



**“Oh! For the Love of Music”
will continue Wednesdays
at 2 PM in the sanctuary.**

We would love to share our Joy of Music in our own living room. However, that would maybe mean being more hospitable? Serving coffee? Tea? Munchies? And there could be a parking problem. I really only want to go down memory lane and play the piano -- and hear Ron lead our friends as they sing all their favorite songs from years past. Thus, we will meet in our church's sanctuary. Won't you join us?

Janet Middlebrook



Four of the Middlebrook granddaughters passing out oranges on Christmas Eve. This is a tradition started by Dick and Marilyn Allen. Many families have carried this on.

Janet Middlebrook

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Love God ♥ Love People ♥ Serve Both

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