



JULY 2023

THE VISITOR

The Newsletter of St. John United Church of Christ - Reading

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SUMMER!

by Reverend Torie Front

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; 7 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. - 1 John 1:5-7

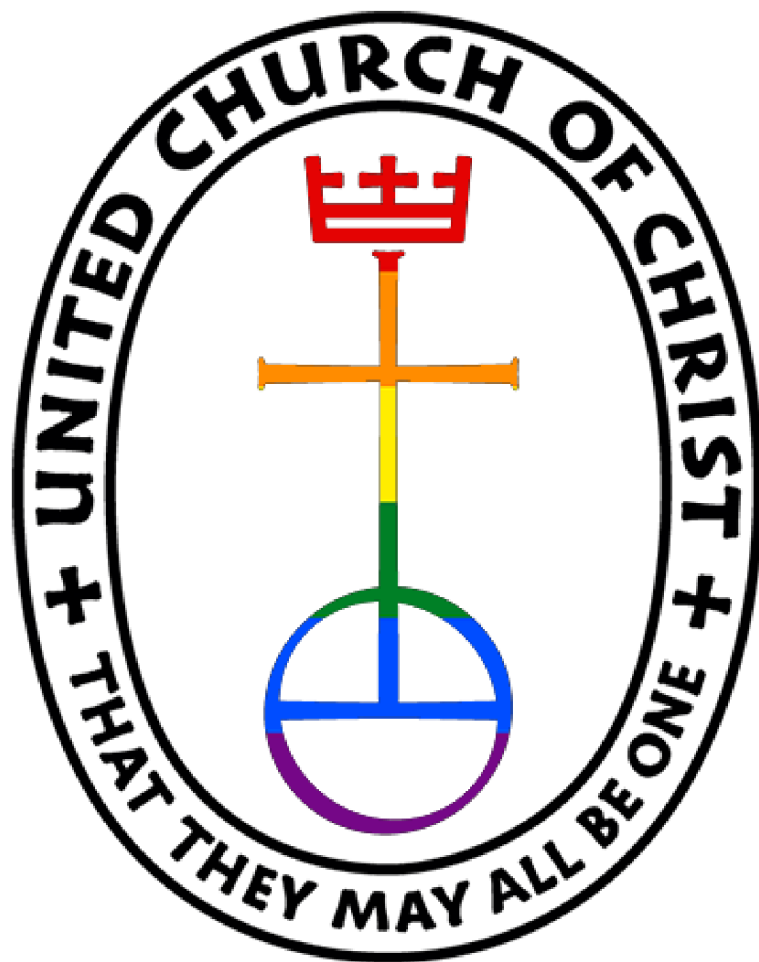
Over the summer, people traditionally take vacations, change their routine, become disconnected. At St. John UCC, and hopefully at all Christian churches the world over, staying connected is key. With the world throwing all sorts of things at us that can pull us away from our Christian fellowship, our prayer support, our feeding of the soul through worship, choosing to continue to stay connected is something that we need to do every day.

We have a short list of members and friends of the church who do not have email, and thus do not receive Leah's pre-worship email with the bulletin and prayer requests, nor my weekly emails. So we need to find ways to keep them connected and in fellowship with us.

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- Perhaps someone with email could adopt someone without and commit to call them every week with any updates or information they need to know.
 - Perhaps we start a Phone Tree to share information.
 - Perhaps we print and mail out information to them weekly.
 - Perhaps there are other ideas out there!

let's all keep walking in the light, confident in God's grace, forgiveness, and love in our lives.

-Rev. Torie



Prayer is another great way to stay connected, and the power of a praying church is amazing! Do you like that prayer requests are sent out in Leah's weekly email to everyone (that has email). Would you prefer to start a separate email group to send and receive emails about prayer as the need arises? We already have a Telephone Prayer Chain - led by Shirley Martin - thank you Shirley, what a great ministry!

As this summer progresses, I invite you to be deliberate about staying in fellowship with your church, with your fellowship of Christians, with your God. How you do this is up to you, but

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN NURTURE



Chair Yoga will be held on Thursday July 6th, 13th & 27th. It will be located in the Fellowship Hall at 5:45pm. Join us immediately following the "Feed My Sheep" Program!



Every Thursday in July, weather permitting we will hold **Water Aerobics** at Shirley Waddell's pool at 6:00pm. Everyone is welcome!



The **Annual Pool Party** will be at Shirley Waddell's as usual. It will be held on Sunday, July 9th! We will order from Il Gusto's for carry out. Look for a sign-up sheet outside the Cozy Corner!



Join us after worship on Sunday, July 16th for a **Potluck & Concert with Emily's Band!** Bring a dish to share! Check the board outside the Cozy Corner for a sign-up sheet.



Our **July Euchre Game** will be held Thursday, July 27th at 6:00pm at Bruce and Linda Read's house. If you are planning to join us for either game, please call Linda at 513-485-6009 so we know how many tables to set up!



Thank you, everyone, for your help and support for the **2023 Rummage Sale!** We raised \$3,100.98 from the sale, \$615.00 from the basket sale and \$346.75 from the bake sale! Great job!



Symposium for Elder Care Professionals - Finding Solutions for the Sandwich Generation:

September 14, 2023 8am-4:30pm - \$20

Scriptures in Seattle - Live Comedy Show: September 16, 2023 8pm - \$25

LaComedia "Miracle on 34th Street": December 28, 2023 after Worship

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 10th 2:00pm

This year's women's retreat will be a repeat of "**Jewels of the Bible**" and held in conjunction with the Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church. The one-day retreat will take place at the Cincinnati Nature Center, and as soon as prices are figured out, we'll let you know. If you missed "Jewels of the Bible" the first time, please take advantage of this great opportunity to look at 12 different women (jewels!) of the Bible. And, if you did attend Jewels before - can you really remember all 12 of them?! Join us again!



BOARD OF DEACONS



It's time to start planning our 2023 **Witness Tree Outreach** to Veterans. If you are interested in being part of this outreach, please contact Rev. Torie. We will have our first planning meeting on June 22nd at 3:30pm at the church.



The primary outreach ministry of St. John UCC is the **"Feed My Sheep" grocery distribution program**, held every Thursday from 4:30pm – 5:30pm. We are handing out around 75 bags of groceries each week, all provided from YOUR support and the donations of some local business. If you have some time during the week to pick up some donated food and bring it to the

church, please let Susie Koehler know.

If you'd like to come and help pack the 75 bags of groceries, repack pet food into gallon or quart baggies, organize toiletries for distribution, etc., this is the place for you. It's a wonderful ministry, definitely touching lives in this community and beyond. And, if you haven't yet had a chance to see what it's all about, come on down some Thursday and check it out! We'd love to have you join us!

**Next Meeting: Thursday, August
24th 2:30pm**



BOARD OF ELDERS



The Ministry Board of Elders is responsible for the **worship experience** on Sunday mornings (or whenever you watch it on YouTube or Facebook!). Part of providing a meaningful worship service involves some behind the scenes work, which cannot be done solely by the Elders. More help is needed, and if you feel God is calling you to serve behind the scenes to help St. John UCC continue to provide the best worship experience possible, here are some things you could do:

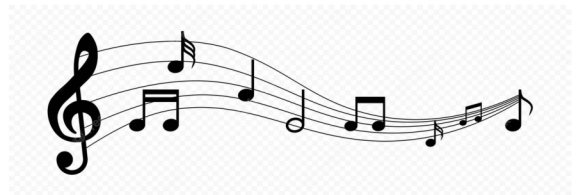
- Ring the church bell after the prelude
- Prepare the Communion Table before Communion Sundays and clean up afterwards
- Count and register the attendance at each worship service

And, some more visible ways of participating in worship on Sunday mornings include signing up to be a Liturgist, Greeter, or Usher. Thank you in advance for taking these needs to

God in your daily prayer and listening for God's guidance.

Huzzah! The sanctuary will (finally!) be painted! Now that the roof is complete, we can begin painting in the sanctuary. This will take several weeks to complete, and is scheduled to begin in July. Therefore, we will most likely move worship to Fellowship Hall for a few weeks to avoid worshipping in an area filled with scaffolding and the smell of fresh paint!

The Ministry Board of Elders is working with the AV Ministry to find ways to continue to offer live-streaming and posting of our worship services on-line during this time.



Here is a schedule of our **guest musicians** and **special appearances** for July:

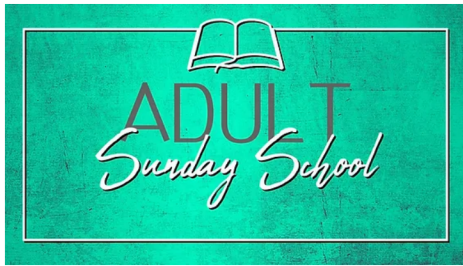
July 2nd: Emily Hogeback, violin

July 9th: Lori Schafer, guest clarinetist

July 16th: Rev. Torie, French horn & Bart Choate, guest musician

July 23rd: Bart Choate, guest musician

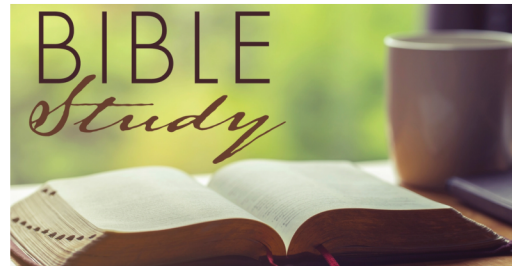
July 30th: Duet - Phil Hogan & Gary Kurtz



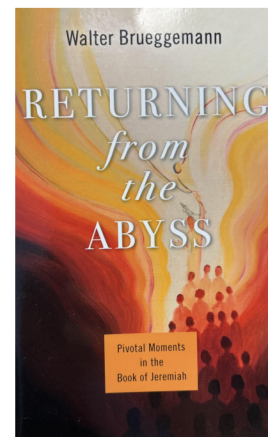
Thought-provoking movie scenes will give us plenty to talk about during three sessions of **Summer Sunday School** at St. John United Church of Christ.

The Elders have decided to test the congregation's interest in 9:00 a.m. gatherings in the Bible Study Room on July 23rd and August 20th. We will view film clips from *Cool Hand Luke*, *Bruce Almighty* and *Hoosiers*, then jointly explore the religious ramifications of these pop culture classics. Relevant scriptures and famous quotations will be offered to keep the discussion on a spiritual track.

Your questions and interpretations will be welcomed. In July, we will see how *Bruce Almighty* works with God. And in August, we will review how the *Hoosiers* trust in God.



St. John UCC continues to offer two **Bible Studies** each week. The first, every Tuesday at 1:00pm, at St. John. The second, every Tuesday at 6:30pm, in the Mount View Terrace Common Room. Please consider joining us at Bible Study!



A **Special Bible Study Invitation**

from Rev. Steve:

I want to invite you to join me on a journey with Jeremiah. This two-phase journey will explore "Pivotal Moments in the Book of Jeremiah" using Walter Brueggemann's recent (2022) book entitled, *Returning from the Abyss*. In a small group discussion format we will navigate our way through the book's 27 chapters of only 163 pages.

Each phase will last 6 consecutive Sundays. Phase #1: October 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th and November 5th. We will take a long winter break. Phase #2 (Lenten season) February 18th, 25th and March 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th (Palm Sunday). Each session will begin at 11:15 am and conclude at 12:15 pm. If you are interested in joining me on this journey, please sign your name on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Registration will last through Sunday, September 10th.



In 2023, we continue to search for **Worship Volunteers** for each worship. Starting this year, we will trial the option to sign-up to be the Liturgist on a weekly basis, rather than monthly. Rev. Torie will send you your words each week! Greeters and Ushers will sign-up on a monthly basis. If you don't mind arriving at church at 9:30am, consider greeting people at the

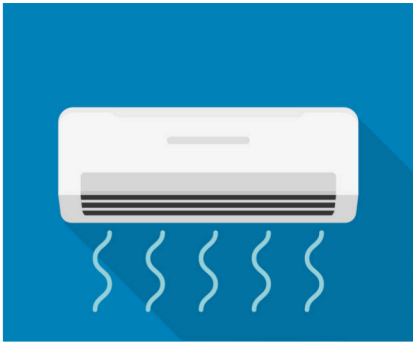
front doors of church, or handing out bulletins to our congregation as an usher. Training is provided for all roles! If you'd prefer to help out financially, sign-up to donate Altar Flowers! Each month, we need \$60 to cover the cost of our beautiful sanctuary flowers. Sign-up to cover half, or all of the cost! All sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board outside the Cozy Corner, sign-up today!

**Next Meeting: Thursday, August
10th 2:30pm**

LECTIONARY PAGE

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon
Acts 27 Revelation 1:9-20	-	July 2nd *Communion*
Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 Psalm 145:8-14 Romans 7:15-25a Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30	July 11th	July 9th
Genesis 25:19-34 Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13 Romans 8:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	July 11th	July 16th
Genesis 28:10-19a Psalm 86:11-17 Romans 8:12-25 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43	July 18th	July 23rd
Genesis 29:15-28 Psalm 119:129-136 Romans 8:26-39 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52	-	July 30th <i>Guest Preacher: Rev. Howard Stern</i>

BOARD OF PROPERTY AND FINANCE



July is here and we can expect the weather to turn hotter and humid as it does every year in our area. It is a challenge to cool the sanctuary for worship services as it takes from 4-6 hours to drop the temperature to a comfortable level. In the past, the **air conditioning** would need to be manually turned on at 5am or 6am every Sunday morning. To make it easier, we have installed new programmable thermostats that will turn the systems on automatically. These new thermostats are high tech and can also be controlled remotely by an app on my cell phone...what a great idea!!



A painting company has been selected to **paint our sanctuary** and they might be starting this month. That means that the sanctuary will be filled with scaffolding and drop cloths. Some initial repair work will be done to walls and cracks before actual painting. Thus, we will be holding church services in Fellowship Hall for 3-4 weeks while the painting is underway. The new paint colors will be lighter, and we will consider adding some additional painting embellishments after the base painting is completed. We are looking forward to a brighter and refreshed appearance in the sanctuary.

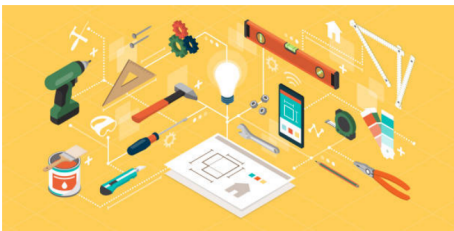


We have talked for several years about **selling the parsonage**, as we really have no need for it and we do not wish to be landlords. So, we are again consulting with a local realtor,

surveyor and real estate lawyer to determine the best method to sell it. There are some complications that will need to be addressed and we are hoping that those can be easily resolved. Money from the sale would go into our Memorial Endowment and then would still provide us with the income that we currently receive from rent. Church Council and the congregation would need to approve the final sale. If you have any thoughts on this, please let us know.



There is a **Workshop Day** scheduled for Saturday, July 8th, from 8am till noon. As always, there will be much to do for all skill levels and energies. Come join us for fun, fellowship, snacks and of course.....some work!!!



We continue to work on many other **projects around the church**. The ceiling in the southwest

tower/stairwell has been repaired and the stairwell has been painted. Soon we will be re-working the choir room to Debbie's satisfaction. Other projects will follow.

Many thanks to all those who help wherever and whenever they can. Your service to the church and community does so much good and is so appreciated by all. Have a happy Independence Day as we celebrate our blessed freedom.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 8th
5:00pm**

St. John United Church of Christ Regular Events

Weekly Events:

Event	Day	Time	Location
Handbell Choir Practice	Sunday	9:00am	Sanctuary
Worship	Sunday	10:00am	Sanctuary
Bible Study Afternoon	Tuesday	1:00pm	Bible Study Room
Bible Study Evening	Tuesday	6:30pm	Mt. View Terrace
Chancel Choir Practice	Wednesday	6:15pm	Choir Room
Feed My Sheep	Thursday	4:30pm	Outside

Monthly Events:

Event	Day	Time	Location
Communion	1st Sunday	10:00am	Sanctuary
Board of Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30pm	Cozy Corner
Pizza Path	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various Locations
Men's Group	Various Sundays	11:00am	Various Locations
Missionary Sewing	1st Wednesday	10:00am	Fellowship Hall
Board of Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5:00pm	Fellowship Hall
Board of Christian Nurture	2nd Wednesday	5:00pm	Fellowship Hall
Board of Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	Last Thursday	6:00pm	The Read's
Church Council	3rd Thursday	5:45pm	Fellowship Hall
Work-ship Day	Last Saturday	8:00am	Church

July Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

July 3 - Becky Davis

July 10 - Wilma Schulte

July 11 - Ann Feldman

July 15 - Ann Seebohm

July 23 - Shirley Martin

July 24 - Denise Hall

July 24 - Whitney Reardon

July 25 - Glenda Richardson

July 28 - Sandy Graves

July 30 - Jeff Davis



Things to do before sanctuary painting on July 3rd:

1. remove all pew cushions
2. remove all bibles and hymnals
3. remove all papers, cards, forms and pencils from the pews
4. remove all communion cups from the pews
5. take down and store the bell tables
6. remove the choir chairs and other chairs and furniture in the chancel area
7. remove all music equipment: bells, music stands, drums, keyboard, etc
8. remove all other stuff from the cubbies around the chancel
9. remove all items from the altar table
10. remove the black curtains from the chancel area
11. remove the electronics, microphones and speakers from around the baby grand piano
12. remove the table and bowl of faith stones
13. remove the flags
14. remove paraments, banners, etc
15. remove any other furniture or anything else that might be in the way
16. move all audio/video equipment away from the walls and secure/protect as needed
17. set up Fellowship Hall for church services: chairs, podium, sound system, tables, altar, piano, live streaming/recording, moving pantry items, etc

4TH OF JULY

WORD SEARCH

T M N W Q J E T A R B E L E C D Y
 I M T Q H H Y M Q R Q U D U E I A
 O Q T A W Q M Z Y E X U C C N T D
 I N D E P E N D E N C E L C J A I
 A S I O U O R H A M U A A T U Q L
 N K S A M E R I C A R P P S O S O
 U R P U F U B E E A Y S T R U B H
 P O A Y D L D W T O E C I N C I P
 K W R W E A A I L P O E A U E O N
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 J V S O D L K V T S L R O K P J B
 W I T O E O M O Y B B F I U P J L
 I A S V Y E M R E D R E M M U S E

America

Blue

Britain

Celebrate

Declaration

Fireworks

Flag

Fourth

Freedom

Holiday

Independence

July

Liberty

Parade

Picnic

Red

Sparklers

Stars

Stripes

Summer

United

White