

The Visitor

August 2020

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

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A Message from Our Church Council President

Kudos to Our Staff.

Your Leadership team and I would like for all of you to join us in expressing a BIG THANK YOU to our staff for their stalwart efforts during our closure.

Kelli Taylor, Michael Sullivan, Dobin Park, Donnie Carr and Kyle Taylor have worked diligently to maintain contact with all of you and to keep you up-to-date while maintaining our facilities and up-grading many of our areas throughout the building.

Kelli has been available to all who needed assistance while very capably performing her regular duties.

Michael and Dobin have done an excellent job of providing weekly Sunday Services in conjunction with our sister churches, while providing us with some outstanding musical performances.

Donnie has been able to deal with projects he normally would not have time for, which have improved the building.

Kyle has worked diligently to complete the computer rebuild, the phone rebuild and update our web-site , all of which has resulted in saving us hundreds of dollars.

We are blessed to have committed personnel like we have at St. John's. So, when you get a chance, say "Thank You" to all of them.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,

Jan Knepshield
President



The story behind the hymn "Amazing Grace"



Written almost two and a half centuries ago in 1772, the words for the beloved song were borne from the heart, mind and experiences of the Englishman John Newton. Knowing the story of John Newton's life as a slave trader and the journey he went through before writing the hymn will help to understand the depth of his words and his gratefulness for God's truly amazing grace.

Having lived through a rather unfortunate and troubled childhood (his mother passed away when he was just six years old), Newton spent years fighting against authority, going so far as trying to desert the Royal Navy in his twenties. Later, abandoned by his crew in West Africa, he was forced to be a servant to a slave trader but was eventually rescued. On the return voyage to England, a violent storm hit and almost sank the ship, prompting Newton to begin his spiritual conversion as he cried out to God to save them from the storm.

Upon his return, however, Newton became a slave ship master, a profession in which he served for several years. Bringing slaves from Africa to England over multiple trips, he admitted to sometimes treating the slaves abhorrently. In 1754, after becoming violently ill on a sea voyage, Newton abandoned his life as a slave trader, the slave trade, and seafaring, altogether, wholeheartedly devoting his life to God's service.

He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1764 and became quite popular as a preacher and hymn writer, penning some 280 hymns, among them the great "Amazing Grace," which first appeared in the Olney Hymns, printed by Newton and poet/fellow writer William Cowper. It was later set to the popular tune NEW BRITAIN in 1835 by William Walker.

In later years, Newton fought alongside William Wilberforce, leader of the parliamentary campaign to abolish the African slave trade. He described the horrors of the slave trade in a tract he wrote supporting the campaign and lived to see the British passage of the Slave Trade Act 1807.

And now, we see how lyrics like:

I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come. Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

continued on next page

carry a much deeper meaning than a sinner's mere gratitude. Close to death at various times and blind to reality at others, Newton would most assuredly not have written "Amazing Grace" if not for his tumultuous past. And many of us would then be without these lovely words that so aptly describe our own relationship with Christ and our reliance on God's grace in our lives:

***Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.***

There's a reason the hymn 'Amazing Grace' remains the favorite hymn for so many people. The powerful lyrics remind us that because of Jesus, none of us are ever lost because God is with us always. Take the time this week to just sit and sing this hymn in the quietness of your home. You will be blessed. Michael Sullivan

Amazing Grace!

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G G/D D7 Em C G G/D D/C G/B

1 A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears re-lieved;
 3 The Lord has prom-ised good to me, his word my hope se-cures;
 4 Through man - y dan - gers, toils and snares I have al - read - y come;
 5 When we've been there ten thou-sand years, bright shin - ing as the sun,

G G/B C G Em G/D D7 G

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.
 how pre - cious did that grace ap - pear the hour I first be-lieved!
 he will my shield and por - tion be as long as life en-dures.
 'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

WORDS: John Newton (1725-1807), alt.; vs. 5, anonymous
 MUSIC: Virginia Harmony, 1831; adapt. Edwin O. Excell (1851-1921)

NEW BRITAIN
 C.M.

A Message from Our Church Council Treasurer

Many thanks all of St. John's members and friends who have kept their tithes and offerings coming in to the church during this awkward and stressful time. We seem to be holding our own financially; the PPP loan has made a big difference. I am continuing to monitor our finances, and will transfer funds from our investment accounts if necessary, as authorized at the Congregational Meeting. So far, it has not been necessary, and I am grateful to you our members and friends for that!

Chuck Hawkins,
Treasurer

Second Quarter Member Financial Statements Are Now Available

Second quarter member financial statements were mailed on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. If you did not receive a financial statement and feel that you should have, you can contact our financial administrator Chris Baker at: Financialadmin@stjohnsuccnewport.org or you can call the church office at (859) 431-1818 for more information.



Next Visitor Deadline: **Wednesday, August 26, 2020**

If you would like to submit an article or receive *The Visitor* via email please contact StJohnsUCC@StJohnsUCCNewport.org.



You may also visit the CONTACT US heading on our website and fill out the appropriate form.

A digital copy of *The Visitor* can be accessed at our website: StJohnsUCCNewport.org under our "News Section."

Prayer Ministry Update

The following letter is from Sgt. Cody Taylor who has served six years in the United States Army, and he has two more years to serve. He has been very grateful to be on the St. John's Military Prayer list.

St. John's United Church of Christ,

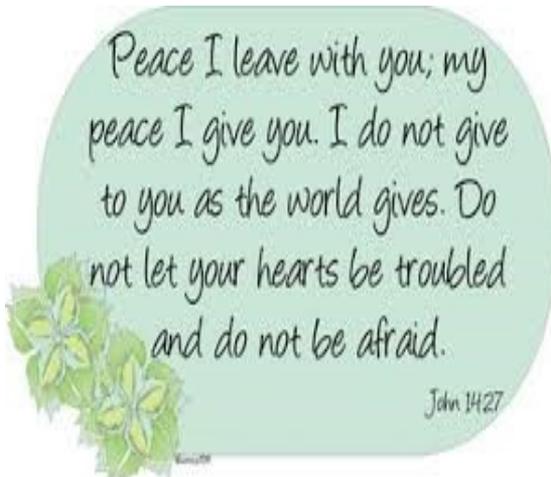
Thank you for your daily prayers for me while I was stationed in Iraq for eight months. Now, I am safely home with my family in Texas. Please continue to pray for my family and me during my last two years of United States Army service.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Cody Taylor

A Prayer for our Pastoral Search Committee

Almighty and ever living God, look favorably upon us, the people of Holy Comforter, in this time of transition as we search for a new pastor. We pray for the life of our congregation, that we may continue to be guided by your love and strengthened in our mission to serve you through ministry, fellowship and worship. We pray for the search committee, that their hearts and minds may be open to what your spirit is saying. We pray for the pastor whose name is yet known to you alone, that he or she be open to your call. Give us your grace to follow where you would lead us and grant us your peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Online Worship Services

Can't come to church? Below are the various ways that you can continue to stay connected to our worship life together. You will still be able to access the bulletin and order of worship for Sunday on our church website (www.stjohnsuccnewport.org). You will be able to access the worship services in several different ways:

Call in (audio only)

This method ONLY works starting at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. To access this each Sunday, you can do the following:

- At 10:30 a.m. on Sundays, call either 929-205-6099 or 312-626-6799 (either number will work).
- You will then be (quickly and repeatedly) prompted to enter a meeting ID – that ID is 997-401- 6614.
- You will then be asked a participant ID. There is no need to enter a number. Simply hit # on your phone and you will be connected to the audio of the service.

That is it. You will be connected.

Video

You can access the video of the worship service starting at 10:30 a.m. ET each Sunday and it will be available any time after that as well. There are multiple ways to access the video of the worship service.

St. John's UCC website

<http://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org>

On the front page of the website will be a permanent link to the worship service. This will take you to a page where the video will be shown.

St. John's UCC Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsuccnewport>

You do not need to have a Facebook account to access this page (but Facebook will nag you about making an account, nothing we can do about that). The service will be posted here. If you have a Facebook account, you will be able to post comments, questions, thoughts about what you experience and how the Spirit speaks to you.

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St. John's YouTube Channel <https://tinyurl.com/y8jmgxq5>

This link will take you to the St. John's YouTube channel and the most recent worship service as well as other videos we are working on. If you have a "Smart TV" or something like a Roku, AppleTV, or other device you can also access this through your TV.

Online Giving Through Your Smartphone

Giving through our GivePlus Mobile app is an easy and convenient way to donate to our church. It only takes a moment to set up an account:

Download the free GivePlus app from the App Store or Google Play

Find our church by ZIP code 41071 or by searching for our Church name.

Make one-time or recurring donations using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account

Log in or donate as a guest

Securely and conveniently manage donations using Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password

Donate!

Thank you for your generosity!



Website Update

Pardon Our Mess, Website Updating

Wondering if the church website is different? Well you would be correct! The church is currently in the process of building a new and improved website for us.

While the process will take some time we invite you to check back each week. We will be working continually to make changes so each time you visit there may be something different.

If there are any questions please contact the church office or you can contact Kyle Taylor at: Kyle.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org

Congratulations Bonnie Hoffmann On Your Retirement

To The St. John's Congregation

I am writing to you to extend a well deserved Thank You and Appreciation for FIFTY YEARS of Service to St. John's Sunday School Program Coordinator Bonnie Hoffmann, who is now retiring. Bonnie has served the youth of St. John's for many years and has decided that after fifty years it is time to retire.

Fifty years--what dedication and commitment. Achievements like this are seldom seen anymore with a joy and dedication as strong as hers.

Bonnie, on behalf of all your friends at St. John's and all of your former students, we say, "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You". It would be interesting to know how many lives you have impacted over the years. You will be missed but we know we will see you in church every week. Thank you again, Bonnie, for everything you have done for this church.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,

Jan Kneppshield
President



Updating the 2021 Church Directory

The church office will begin the process of updating the church directory for 2021. Over the past year we have been celebrating all of our members and friends birthdays and anniversaries in the Visitor each month. While we have some of these dates on file, we are still missing quite a few. If you could take a moment to fill out the form on page 9 and drop it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail it to the church office, we will take care of updating your information. We are asking for a little more information this year because we have been trying to update all of our members information in our PowerChurch database over this past year. If you do not know the dates for some of the information on the form, don't worry, you can just leave it blank. Thank you for all of your help in this endeavor.

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Family Name & Children 17 years and under: _____

Adult 1 _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday: We never reveal your age but PowerChurch requires us to enter your birthyear

Anniversary: _____

Date Joined: _____

Baptism Date: _____

Confirmation Date: _____

Adult 2 _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday: We never reveal your age but PowerChurch requires us to enter your birthyear

Anniversary: _____

Date Joined: _____

Baptism Date: _____

Confirmation Date: _____

Church Technology Update

Greetings St. John's Members & Friends

Over the past few months I have been busy working on projects for the church and coming up with new ones to take our church to the next level. I wanted to update everyone on what has been done as well as what can be seen here in the future:

- Our network has been completely updated with a more stable network and whole church WiFi. This allows our staff to work on a consistent network and members/groups to access the internet anywhere in the building.
- We have converted our internet and phone service from Cincinnati Bell to Spectrum. With the changes that came from this we have created a faster and more modern service for all while saving money each month.
- We are in the process of creating a new website for our church. While some things will look similar, you will notice that many things are different to showcase our church better and provide more accessible information to someone new who is looking at our church. We ask that you keep checking back each week to see the progress we are making on the website. Any suggestions for any groups that would like information presented on there please reach out to me so I can showcase everyone.
- We have continued performing our online services that began with the pandemic. We will continue to work with our sister churches on these while we return to our normal services.
- Kelli and myself will continue to work on getting information out through our online email campaigns to keep everyone informed of new events and changes coming to the church.
- I will work with fellow staff to create a plan for our social media accounts to promote information about the church and spread good news.
- I will work here in the next few weeks to brainstorm some new ideas on how to get information out about our church to new people. This will include taking a look at current and new recruiting strategies to try and get new people here. If anyone has any information please reach out to me and I would be happy to discuss it with you.

It has been a pleasure getting so much work done so far and continuing on with this progress for St. John's. I am always available to talk to, so, if

you have questions or ideas, you can always reach me at:
Kyle.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org

Thank you and have a blessed day!

Kyle Taylor
Director of Communication & Outreach

Puzzles for Kids and Kids at Heart!

BIBLE WORD SEARCH!

BASIC WORDS OF THE BIBLE



JESUS CHRIST

SALVATION

JEW

GENTILE

HOLY SPIRIT

GOD THE FATHER

PERSECUTE

PRAY

TITHE

MINISTRY

BIBLE

HOLY

SACRIFICE

FAITH

MIRACLE

NAZARETH

BETHLEHEM

JERUSALEM

BAPTIZE

TEMPTATION

SIN