



TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

CONTACTS

Phone 859-431-1818
 Email stjohnsucc@stjohnsuccnewport.org
 Website www.stjohnsuccnewport.org
 Facebook St. John's United Church of Christ–Newport, KY

PROGRAM	LOCATION	TIME
Coffee Fellowship Time	Fellowship Hall (L.L.)	9:00 a.m.
Worship	Sanctuary	10:00 a.m.
Infant, Toddler, Preschool & School Age Child Care	South Hallway	9:30 a.m.

CHURCH STAFF

POSITION	PERSON	CONTACT
Designated Pastor	J. Martin Westermeyer	Shaman4@zoomtown.com
Pastor of Visitation	John Robson	Jmarrobson@gmail.com
Director Of Music/Organist	Michael Sullivan	Michael.Sullivan@stjohnsuccnewport.org
Associate Director of Music	Dobin Park	Pianist0587@gmail.com
Office Administrator	Kelli Taylor	Kelli.Taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org
Director of Communication & Outreach	Kyle Taylor	Kyle.Taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org
Financial Administrator	Chris Baker	Financialadmin@stjohnsuccnewport.org

CHURCH LEADERS

PERSON	POSITION	CONTACT
Jan Knepshield	Church President	(H) 859-261-2567 (C) 859-912-2563
Carol Fickenscher	Church Vice President	(H) 859-635-4638
Carolyn Garriott	Church Secretary	(C) 859-801-0067
Chuck Hawkins	Church Treasurer	Hawkins@NKU.EDU

Church Office Hours

Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 Tuesday Closed
 Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 Thursday Closed
 Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 Calls will be answered off-site on days when the office is closed.



December 17, 2023
10:00 a.m.
Third Sunday of Advent



Thought for the Day before Worship

*Advent is: Waiting for Christ to come, with leisure-
waiting with our hearts, minds, souls, and imagination wide open,
to let the light of Christ shine in them and hence through us.*

*All who are able are welcome to stand

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude *“O Little Town Of Bethlehem”* *(Richard Purvis)*

Tower Bell

Introit

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming as saints of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of
winter, when half-spent was the night

***Call to Worship - based on Psalm 126 (responsive)**

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them."**

The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

**Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with
shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.**

Let us Worship our God as we follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ!!

***Hymn #189** *“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”* *(Regent Square)*

Welcoming and Leading Us This Morning

Preaching Today: Rev. J. Martin Westermeyer

Liturgist: Lexi Carmony

Organist: Michael Sullivan

Choral Director: Dobin Park

Cantor: Jean Nutgrass

Candle Bearers: Diana Stamm
Katheryn Jones
Charlie Frederick

Sound Technician: Robert Pettus

Greeters: Darlene Knepshield & Bertie Jo Tuerpe

Ushers: Steve Twehues, Ralph Schoulthies & Mike Hanson

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This Week

Sunday, December 17: 10:00 a.m. Worship Service/Third Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 18: 7:00 p.m. AA & Al-Anon Meeting

Tuesday, December 19: 6:30 p.m. East Row Garden Club Meeting
7:00 p.m. NA Meeting

Thursday, December 21: 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, December 23: 9:00 a.m. AA Meeting

Sunday, December 24: 10:00 a.m. Worship Service/Fourth Sunday of Advent
7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candle Light Service

Hearing Assistance

We have wireless receivers for the hearing impaired which you may obtain from an usher.

Pastoral Care Notice

If a pastoral care need arises, please contact the church office at (859) 431-1818 and we will get a message to Pastor Marty or Pastor John Robson to contact you.

In Our Prayers

Joan Berkemeyer, Norma Biery, Flo Grey, Betty Jo Haas, Family of Mary Haas, Donna & Phil Hamilton, Marilyn Hanson, Melvin Hanson, Carol & Henry Marksberry, Barbara Runge, Bill Seibert, Family of Bruce Shay, Ed Von Strohe, Bonnie Walter, Wendy Watts & Betty Webster

Continued Prayerful Support

Homebound members.
Those in assisted living and nursing homes.
Church Leadership Team, Ministry Teams, and all our church leaders.
Designated Pastor Rev. J. Martin Westermeyer
Pastor of Visitation John Robson

Homebound Member of the Week

Our homebound member of the week is Betty Webster. Betty's birthday is Monday, December 25th. Take a moment this week to send her a card or give her a call as we celebrate Betty as our member of the week!

Her address is:
Betty Webster
57 Maple Avenue
Highland Heights, KY 41076

Children's Activity Bags

Activity bags for the children are located at each entrance of the church. Feel free to pick up a bag for your child (children) to work on during the worship service. When the service is done just drop the bags off at each exit so that we may replenish the bags for the following week.

Audio Recordings of Our Sunday Services

Did you miss a Sunday service or would like to hear one over again? You can get a CD audio recording of any service each week down on the table located at the North Lobby entrance. The recordings are separated by date so just look for the service you want to hear and take it home.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Where are you, God? For we have not seen your face or heard your voice or felt your healing touch. We have doubted the credentials of those who claim to be your messengers. Horrible events in our world leave us shaken and hopeless. We are offended by promises unrealized and good news unfilled. Yet even as we confess our anger with conditions in the world, we must also acknowledge our own blindness, deafness, and resistance to change. O God, we do not want to go on this way. Come to save us, we pray. Amen.


*Assurance of Pardon (responsive)

The one who has come and is coming announces good news that turns our lives around. There is sight for all who have turned away from seeing, and truth for those who have covered their ears. In Christ, the lame walk, the sick are healed, and the dead are raised. God reigns, forgives us, and strengthens us for greatness as we serve in God's realm, which is already here.

Our sins are forgiven because this great God loves us. Nothing in all creation can separate us from that love. Praise be to God! Amen!

Please be seated

Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy



Cantor: 1. O - so - so o - so - so, pyong - hwa - ui - im - gum,
2. Come now, O God of hope, make us one bod - y.
3. Come now, O God of peace, make us one bod - y.
4. Come now, O God of joy, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - so.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, re - con - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, re - con - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, re - con - cile your peo - ple.

(congregation sings verse 4 as directed)

Prayer (unison)

Come, O Holy One, breaker of chains and renewer of life! Open our eyes to your presence in all the earth. Stir us to proclaim gladly the signs of your love: the liberation of those oppressed, the healing of those frail and broken, springs of water in all the parched places, and Jesus Christ risen and alive, through whom we pray. Amen.

From the Major Prophets: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For I, the LORD, love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my whole being shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Christmas Season begins on Sunday, December 24th when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Join us at 7:00 pm for our candle light Christmas Eve Service with communion.



2024 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH DIRECTORIES

The 2024 church offering envelopes and church directories are available to be picked up in the hallway by the church office. You can pick them up on Sunday morning or during church office hours which are Monday & Wednesday 9:00 am-3:00pm and Friday 9:00am-1:00pm. If you do not have offering envelopes and would like a set, please contact Kelli in the church office.



CHURCH BOOK CLUB - ALL ARE WELCOME!

Saturday January 27, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.-church parlor
The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch watchmaker who became a heroine of the Resistance, a survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, and one of the most remarkable evangelists of the twentieth century. In World War II she and her family risked their lives to help Jews and underground workers escape from the Nazis, and for their work they were tested in the infamous Nazi death camps. Only Corrie among her family survived to tell the story of how faith ultimately triumphs over evil.

Here is the riveting account of how Corrie and her family were able to save many of God's chosen people. For 35 years millions have seen that there is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still. Now *The Hiding Place*, repackaged for a new generation of readers, continues to declare that God's love will overcome, heal, and restore.

WELCOME!

Welcome to this house of prayer and worship!

We pray that your experience of worship will deepen your faith and prepare you for the week ahead. We believe God's Spirit is present in our listening to the Word and our response of discipleship. In our greeting of one another we sense the presence of Christ.

May you know His grace and peace today!

Please sign the guest register when it comes to your seat.



Open flower dates are December 24th & 31st
To reserve your special date, please call the church office.

CHRISTMAS FUND

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

This year's Christmas Fund theme is "Grace upon grace," from John 1:16:

"From Christ's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

Join with others in the United Church of Christ to help return "Grace upon grace" to those who have given so much to each of us and to our churches by giving generously to the Christmas Fund this year.

This special offering will be collected on Sunday, December 24th.

From the Letters of Paul: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this

Anthem

"Let There Be Christmas"

(Joseph Martin)

Let there be music, let there be praise; let there be singing
to fill every space. Let there be starshine, dazzling and white.
Let there be worship, let there be Christmas tonight.

Let there be carols, let there be song. Let there be angels
to sing loud and strong. Let there be candles, gentle and bright. Let there be worship. Let there be Christmas
tonight.

Christmas, come now and fill us with love. Bring your spirit of grace from above. Christmas come, let our
hope be restored.

Bring us news that a savior is born. Christ, the Savior, is born.

Let there be glory, let there be peace. Let there be promise,
let justice increase. Heaven has spoken, "Let there be light."
Come all ye faithful, let there be Christmas tonight.

Let there be music, let there be singing, let there be worship,
Let there be Christmas tonight.

Come to the manger, kneel and adore him. O let there be Christmas tonight.

From the Gospels: John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Sermon

“What Are You Waiting For?” Rev. J. Martin Westermeyer

Affirmation of Faith: The Kansas City Statement of Faith, 1913

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love, and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us, and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and reveals them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of all people.

We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all humankind, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood.

Depending, as did our parents, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God, and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Hymn #162

“like a child”

(Like A Child)

Gathering Together in Prayer

Joys & Concerns – Silent Prayer – Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Response

O Holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels...The great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Offertory Invitation

In gratitude to the Creator of heaven and earth, who waters the parched places in our lives, we now bring our offerings with joy and singing. Join in the happiness of those who share in the transforming work of God.

Offertory

“The Journey”

(Lloyd Larson)

Where is He, O where is He? His star blazes in the night;
as we trace the changing skies, He is hiding from our sight.
Can you tell us where He lies? We would worship Him tonight,
We will Journey til we find, and our search is turned to sight.

Your guiding light shows us the way; we see your morning star ascend!
To you dear Christ, all searches come,
In you our Journey finds its end.

The star beams its golden ray over sleepy Bethlehem,
where with joy we find the Child, and with gifts we
Worship Him.

While we thought we came to you in a little starlit place,
It was You who came to us, Christ the glory of God’s face.

*Doxology

**Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heav’n-ly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,
and with his blood man-kind hath bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

*Prayer of Dedication

Accept our gifts in the spirit with which they are given, for the glory of your name and the work of your kingdom in the world. Let our devotion to you be demonstrated not in the brightness of the lights that shine from our windows but in the way you shine in our lives of service and gratitude. God of grace, God of glory, God of peace, we praise you in this act of selfless giving. Amen.

*Hymn #183

“Once in Royal David’s City”

(Irby)

*Benediction

*Choral Response

Postlude

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

(Lani Smith)